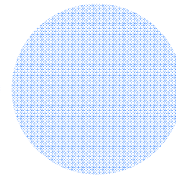
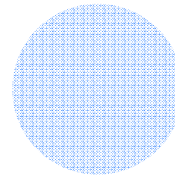
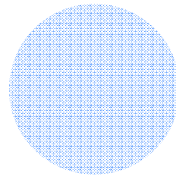
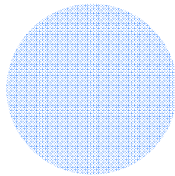
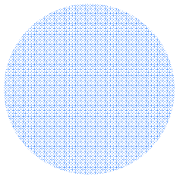




Public Opinion Report



Master Plan Update/Sustainability Plan

City of Lowell
Department of Planning and Development
JFK Civic Center, 50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, MA 01852

December, 2011



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Seeking to better meet local, regional and global needs, and to ensure that resources are fairly distributed for current and future generations, the City of Lowell set out to develop a long range vision for citywide sustainability. This vision, which will be shaped by social, economic, and environmental development strategies, will serve as a framework for citywide planning over the coming decade.

The process of updating the city's original (2003) Comprehensive Master Plan as a Sustainability Plan began in early 2011 under the purview of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). To ensure the participation of residents, business owners, institutional leaders, and other community stakeholders in the development of this shared vision, significant outreach efforts were undertaken. The following list summarizes the public's participation in the visioning process:

- 800 residents completed a telephone survey conducted in 4 languages
- 175 participants, including 61 teens from 6 local youth organizations, shared over 1,000 comments through an online participatory planning tool, Community PlanIt
- 160 community stakeholders attended 5 visioning sessions on topics ranging from Transportation to Economic Development
- Over 200 attended educational tours and discussions held during Lowell's 1st Annual Sustainability Week
- 113 photographs were submitted to the Sustainability Snapshots Photography Contest for consideration in the Sustainability Plan

Highlights

- While the majority of residents feel that there are many important aspects to choosing a community, 75% of survey participants agree that the following are main priorities: *Police and Safety, Cost of Living, City Services, Neighborhood Character, Schools, and Environmental Quality*. With the exception of *City Services*, these aspects were also prioritized most highly by 2002 survey participants.
- Slightly more than half of the survey participants (55%) rated Lowell highly as a place to live (8, 9 or 10 on a 10 point scale), and 75% rated Lowell a 7 or higher. Survey results in 2002 were nearly identical. On average, as the age of participants increased, so did the participants' rating of the city. Caucasian and Latino residents rated the city more favorably than Africans, African-Americans, and Asians. Those earning between \$30,000 and \$74,999 rated the city better than residents with either lower or higher incomes.
- The majority of participants (52%) use the Lowell Sun as their primary source for information about events and services, 18% communicate using word of mouth, 12% watch TV, 10% visit the city's website, 3% listen to the radio, and 5% learn about information through some other means.
- Survey participants were asked to rate the city on how well it performs on a series of 40 civic items. Of these items, 50% of survey participants ranked 18 (nearly half) of these items very highly (8, 9 or 10 on a ten point scale). 65% ranked the following items as a 7.5 or higher, on average: *A city that preserves its historic places, Good trash removal, Plenty of public events and festivals, Good recycling program, and Plenty of cultural activities*. The following items were ranked favorably by fewer than one third of participants: *Traffic that moves freely through town, Lots of job opportunities in the city, Well-maintained roads and sidewalks, Stores in my*

neighborhood that meet my basic needs, Streets and walkways designed to keep accidents from happening, Reasonable property taxes, and Convenient pathways for pedestrians and bicycles. Further analysis and comparisons between 2001 and 2011 data can be found on pages 29-36.

- When comparing perceived importance to Lowell's performance on those attributes, there are some areas in which the city is exceeding its expectations of residents, and others where it is not performing up to their expectations. When comparing a civic item's relative importance to Lowell's relative performance, there are several areas that show a performance gap. The following items are among those with the largest negative performance gap, indicating room for improvement: *A place I feel safe, Buildings that are well maintained, Reasonable property taxes, Traffic that moves freely through the city, Lots of job opportunities for me in the city, Roads and sidewalks that are well maintained, Snow removal, and Incentives that encourage energy efficiency.*
- When asked what trade-offs they would make on a series of development issues, survey participants made the following selections:
 - **Preserve Cost of Living** - While enhanced city services are important to residents, 80% indicated they would rather control for tax increases than see city services like trash and snow removal improved (16%).
 - **Prioritize Bike and Pedestrian Access** - While traffic flow is a concern, the majority of participants (54%) would rather create ways for bikes and pedestrians to share roads than make it easier for cars to move through the city (42%).
 - **Make Space for Trails and Conservation Land** - Although there is a need for all types of recreational facilities and spaces, participants indicated that the greatest need was for more trails and conservation areas (40%), as opposed to athletic fields (31%) or playgrounds (26%). The percentage increase of those desiring more trails and conservation lands was the most significant of all three categories, from 26% in 2002 to 40% in 2011.

- **Balance Housing with Open Space** - Although maintaining a variety of housing options is important to residents, and this was the more pressing concern in 2002, in 2011 63% would rather preserve or enhance open space than see more housing built (33%).
 - **Beautify the Neighborhoods** - While beautification of Lowell's downtown and gateway areas is clearly a priority to 43% of residents, 55% of participants would rather have the city pay greater attention to improving residential areas.
 - **Protect Neighborhood Character** - Although private property rights are of high importance to Lowell residents, the majority (56%) of participants would rather see neighborhood character maintained and construction regulated than allow owners and builders to do as they wish with their properties (41%). This trend of protecting neighborhood character mirrors the trends from the 2002 survey results.
 - **Encourage Job Growth** - In the midst of an economic downturn, it is logical that jobs remain highly important to the majority of residents (54%), even at the encroachment of industrial and commercial development in their neighborhoods.
 - **Support Local Businesses** - Most participants (67%) would rather see the city support smaller, locally owned enterprises than focusing attention on larger national companies (29%).
 - **Protect the Natural Environment** - An overwhelming percentage of survey participants (81%) saw great value in prioritizing policies that protected the physical environment, even at a greater short-term cost to the City.
- Understandably, given the recent reductions in State and Federal aid and consequent cuts to local government operations, there has been an increased importance placed on maintaining city services, as noted by survey participants. However, the simultaneously high prioritization of city services and property tax reduction poses a challenge for Lowell at a time when municipal resources are diminishing, as it is difficult to deliver public services of a high caliber without

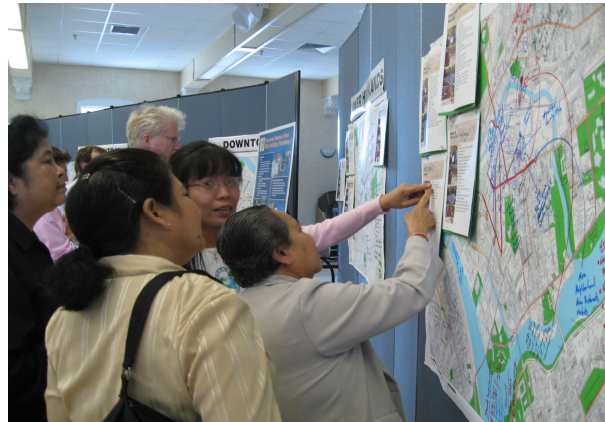
sufficient tax revenue, particularly as costs of service delivery continue to increase.

- Reflecting housing and employment trends over the past decade, survey participant interests have understandably shifted from affordable housing to jobs. While housing sale prices have dropped, fewer respondents have identified housing affordability as a major concern. In contrast, as unemployment rates have risen, more participants identified job opportunities as a major priority. This shift may inform how increasingly limited funding to assist Lowell’s low- and moderate-income residents should be applied.
- While a variety of topics arose throughout the visioning session and online planning processes, a handful of these topics were raised across many meetings and forums. Given their popularity and particular importance to community stakeholders, those topics are noted below:
 - **Preservation of Natural Resources** - Whether the discussion was centered around the recycling needs of multi-unit residential buildings, the use of municipal solar arrays as “learning laboratories” for school-aged children, the incorporation of rain gardens into parking areas to prevent flooding, the addition of street trees to “cool” the city and improve neighborhood walkability, or the organization of “greener” festivals, preserving Lowell’s physical environment was a main priority for stakeholders.
 - **Bicycle, Bus and Pedestrian Amenities** - While bike lanes and walking trails were a natural focus of the *Transportation* and *Open Space* sessions, these topics also arose during discussions on sidewalk snow removal in *Housing & Public Services*, employee commuter options in *Economic Development, Workforce Investment & Institutional Partnerships*, and the establishment of bike-friendly festivals in *Community Character, Engagement & Identity*. Several participants noted limited hours of service as the primary deterrent to more regular bus system usage.

- **Information Access, Communication and Education** - Numerous community members expressed the need for enhanced outreach and communication strategies. The lack of translated materials, sufficient signage for parks and trails, awareness of housing and energy efficiency incentive programs, and accurate representation of the city's programming through local media sources were all stated as areas to be addressed. Participants also recommended that the use of newer technologies and social media be balanced with more traditional methods of outreach, such as newsletter mailings, banners on major thoroughfares, and updates through utility bills so as to reach a broad spectrum of residents. Education around code enforcement and ecological sustainability was also recommended.
- **Community Character and Pride of Place** - The level of pride in Lowell's history and cultural heritage was at the forefront of many conversations with stakeholders. Many felt that the city could better meet resident needs and draw more visitors to the region by further capitalizing on these unique resources. While the preservation of traditional architecture and the local art scene gave residents a sense of pride, neglected buildings and infrastructure, in addition to the perception of Lowell being unsafe, were noted as aspects of the city in need of improvement. Participants hoped to see the quality of life in their neighborhoods enhanced through the collective investment of developers, major institutional stakeholders, and the city itself.

Our Approach to Public Participation

A city's long-range plan has the greatest value if the vision behind it is truly shaped in collaboration with the local community. When seeking input through its sustainability planning process, therefore, the city's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) sought to engage as broad a sample of the population as



possible. By using a multi-pronged approach, the DPD Steering Committee managing the process succeeded in reaching a diverse and largely representative sample of participants. Throughout the Spring and Summer of 2011, over 1,000 community stakeholders offered their input on how to make the city more sustainable through a series of both fun and informative activities and events.

To ensure representation across a number of demographic variables, the city hired a consultant team, Research America, INC to conduct a telephone survey in the 4 most commonly spoken languages in the city: English, Spanish, Portuguese and Khmer. 800 residents completed the survey in the Spring of 2011, providing useful insights on how Lowell was performing on a variety of civic items, and what improvements were needed.

Another more traditional component of the outreach process included a series of visioning sessions facilitated by 20 staff from DPD and other city departments. Over 160 community residents and stakeholders from a variety of local businesses and institutions attended an initial informational meeting and 5 public visioning sessions on topics that included Housing, Public Services, Transportation, Economic Development, Community Character and Engagement, and Open Space and Natural Resources.

To ensure the participation of teens and young professionals, the city opted for an additional, less orthodox approach: an online game. Through a partnership with Emerson College, Lowell was the first city to launch Community PlanIt, a participatory planning tool which was utilized by 175 people over the course of a 2-week period. Through the course of the launch, players provided the city with over 1,000 ideas on how to make the city more sustainable.



To raise awareness about Lowell's accomplishments as a sustainable community and determine ways to better incorporate the principles and practices of sustainability into the citywide plan, the city in partnership with the Green Building Commission, hosted Lowell's first Sustainability

Week. Held in conjunction with the launch of Community PlanIt, the week consisted of a series of educational tours, workshops, films, and a citywide bike ride, and was attended by over 200 people. The Backyard Beekeeping workshop displayed was led by members of the Pawtucketville Citizens Council and attended by over a dozen community members. Photographs are currently being showcased on the city's website and Facebook page.

To further build a sense of ownership over and pride in the city's long range vision for the future, DPD hosted the Sustainability Snapshots Photography Contest, collecting over 100 images from residents to include in the final document. Six awards were granted in various contest categories and were presented by the Mayor and City Council in November of 2011.

Various methods were utilized to spread the word about these events and initiatives. The following page details the public outreach strategy that was undertaken.

OUTREACH STRATEGY

City Boards & Commissions

Members from a variety of city boards and commissions, including the City Council, Solid Waste & Recycling Committee, Green Building Commission, Disability Commission, Immigration Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Youth Council were explicitly invited to participate.

Public Presentations

Presentations on the public participation process were made before 12 neighborhood associations, the Lowell Non-profit Alliance, Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, Elder Services, Healthy Weight Task Force, Lowell Community Health Center's Teen Coalition, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell, United Teen Equality Center, Coalition for a Better Acre, and the Adult Education Center classes.

Email Newsletters

A series of informational e-blasts were sent out to over 2,000 community stakeholders, including non-profit leaders, teachers, parents, and business owners, among others.

Flyers & Posters

In addition to posting flyers downtown and in the neighborhood business districts, DPD partnered with the following institutions to further spread the word to their constituencies: Cambodian Mutual Assistance Center, Coalition for a Better Acre, Community Teamwork Inc, Lowell Alliance for Families and Neighborhoods, Lowell Housing Authority, Lowell Senior Center, Massachusetts Alliance for Portuguese Speakers, Middlesex Community College, North Canal Tenant Council, and UMass Lowell. Flyers were also distributed to local temples, churches and other religious institutions. Flyers were made available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Khmer.

Social Media, Website & Blogs

The public participation process was advertised through the city's website, Facebook, Twitter, and through a number of local blogs.

Radio & Television

Lowell Telecommunications Corporation filmed and aired the first public meeting, and posted information on the visioning session process in four languages through its bulletin. Broadcasts were also made through local radio stations.

Newspaper

Information on the visioning sessions, online planning tool, Sustainability Week, and photography contest was made available through the Lowell Sun.

Next Steps

Feedback from the local community has and will continue to inform the city's vision for the future. Recommendations made throughout the public participation process in 2011 will be incorporated into the citywide plan that DPD develops in 2012 in the same way that stakeholder participation will inform future planning efforts and updates to the revised plan. The city hopes that the dialogue around citywide sustainability will be an on-going one, and that the document created will be utilized by the community at large.

Survey

Overview

The telephone survey that was conducted in the Spring of 2011 closely resembled the survey that was conducted nearly a decade ago to collect input in preparation for the original 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan. After making minor revisions to the survey instrument internally, the Department of Planning and Development hired consultant firm Research America, INC. to translate and conduct the survey, and to provide raw, coded data. Data were then analyzed and interpreted by DPD staff for the purposes of this report. The 2011 survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

The purpose of the survey was to uncover public sentiment regarding issues affecting the City of Lowell, with particular attention paid to issues relating to social, economic and environmental sustainability. In particular, the survey sought to uncover:

- What economic, environmental and social issues regarding the city are most important to Lowell residents?
- How well is Lowell performing on those issues?
- What improvements should the city be focused on?

The method employed by Research America, INC was similar to that of the 2002 consultant team, Davidson Peterson Associates. Surveys in 2011 were conducted in 4 languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese and Khmer. In 2002, Brazilian Portuguese was also included as a fifth language option. A total of 800 residents participated in the telephone survey between April to May of 2011, where as 1001 completed the survey in 2002.

The survey instrument raised the following questions:

- What factors are important in judging a community where they might live?
- How is Lowell performing on specific issues of importance?
- How satisfied are they overall with Lowell as a place to live?
- What is the public sentiment on some key resource allocation issues?
- What is the public feeling on how Lowell should view itself?

- How do residents find out about events and services?
- If three things could be changed to improve their quality of life, what would those be?

Demographics

To capture as demographically representative a sample of resident sentiment as possible, a random-digit-dial (RDD) household telephone list was purchased by Research America, INC (RAI). The list included a diverse sample of residents in terms by ethnicity, neighborhood, income, and gender. Using computer aided telephone interview (CATI) stations, RAI called a randomized population of resident heads of households (over 18 years of age). Through the CATI system software, quotas were set for ethnicity and neighborhood using 2010 Census figures.

To match the category breakdowns for ethnicity in 2011 with those in 2002, some survey response options for the question ‘What is your ethnicity?’ were combined for the purposes of analysis. Response categories (a) African, and (b) Black/African American became “African & African American”. Response categories (c) Brazilian, (d) Portuguese, and (e) Latino were joined to become “Latino”. Response categories (e) Cambodian, and (g) Other Asian, were combined to become “Asian”, and category (f) White or Caucasian became simply “Caucasian”. In terms of the Census 2010 breakdowns, “Caucasians” were non-Latino White residents. “Africans & African Americans” were non-Latino Blacks/African-Americans. “Asians” were non-Latino Asians, and “Latinos” were Latinos.

Ethnicity	% Per 2010 Census	% Per Survey
Caucasian	53	61
African & African American	6	6
Latino	17	18
Asian	20	13
Other	4	2

In the case of neighborhoods, the categories “Christian Hill” and “Downtown” were omitted from the listing available to participants through that demographic question in the survey. Fortunately, the majority of participants were specific when answering “other”, and many listed addresses in either Christian Hill or Downtown as a response, so there was a way to incorporate those participants into the demographic tabulations. Quotas set combined the Upper Highlands with the Lower Highlands, and Lower Belvidere with Belvidere.

Neighborhood	% Per 2010 Census	% Per Survey
Acre	11	7
Back Central	5	4
Belvidere	10	15
Centralville & Christian Hill	15	17
Downtown	5	4
Highlands	28	27
Pawtucketville	14	16
South Lowell & Sacred Heart	12	10

Similarly to ethnicity and neighborhood, the gender breakdown in the survey closely matched the population in the city.

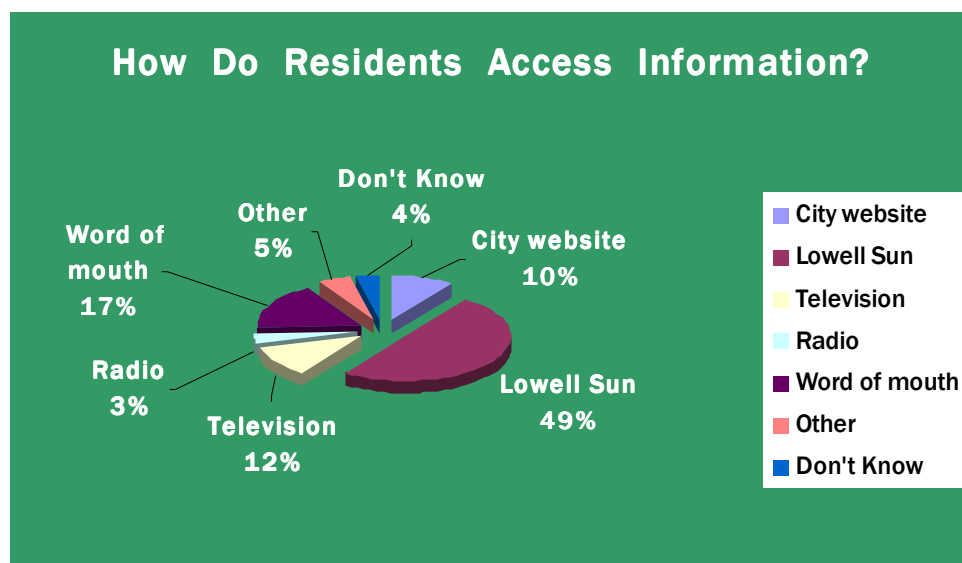
Gender	% Per 2010 Census	% Per Survey
Male	50	46
Female	50	54

Income data from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey were used as a means for comparison with survey data, as this information was not specifically collected for the 2010 Census.

Income	% Per 2005-2009 ACS	% Per Survey
Under \$49,999	50	60
\$50,000 - \$74,999	19	13
\$75,000 and over	31	27

Ways That Residents Access Information

Lowell survey participants were asked how they tend to find out about citywide events and services. The majority of participants (52%) use the Lowell Sun as their primary source for information, 18% communicate using word out mouth, 12% watch TV, 10% visit the city’s website, 3% listen to the radio, and 5% learn about information through some other means. The most common responses under the “other” category were through flyers, mailings, another newspaper, or through their children’s school system.



When comparing the types of media sources sought with the age of participants, it was determined that those over 70 (65%) were most likely to read the Lowell Sun of all age

groups, followed by those aged 50-69 (57%). Those aged 30-49 (42%) and under 30 (34%) were considerably less likely to read the paper.

Participants under 30 (13%) and between the ages of 30-49 (15%) were most likely of all groups to go onto the city's website to find the information they needed to access, where as approximately 1% of those over 50 years of age used the www.lowellma.gov site.

Those under the age of 30 (29%), as well as those aged 30-49 (24%) were most apt of all age groups to communicate by word of mouth. Participants over 70 (1%) were least likely to communicate by word of mouth. Those under 30 were also most likely to watch TV (20%) where as those over 70 were least likely to watch it (11%).

Of all ethnic groups, Asians (27%) were most likely to use word of mouth to transmit information, followed by Latinos (22%), and Africans and African Americans (20%). Caucasians (17%) were least likely to communicate by word of mouth of any ethnic group.

Caucasians were most likely of all groups to read the Lowell Sun (57%) where as Africans and African Americans were least likely to do so (36%).

Africans and African Americans (27%) and Latinos (23%) were significantly more likely to get their information by watching television than were Caucasians (8%) or Asians (16%). Although no ethnic group used the city website frequently, and there was little variation in the reported level of usage, Caucasians were most likely to use it (11%), whereas Latinos were least likely to do so (7%).

In their responses to "other", Caucasians were the only group to report accessing information through their children's school system or through the Lowell Senior Center. Asians were most likely to list other newspapers or billboards as their responses to "other".

Aspects of Importance When Choosing a Community

Through the survey, Lowell residents were asked the importance of fourteen characteristics when choosing a community. All thirteen characteristics posed in the 2002 survey instrument were posed again, with the addition of *Public Health*, which was incorporated into the 2011 instrument.

The majority of residents surveyed in 2011 felt that all aspects questioned were important. However, over 75% of participants agreed that the following six were of high importance when choosing a community:

- *Police and Safety*
- *Cost of Living*
- *City Services*
- *Neighborhood Character*
- *Schools*
- *Environmental Quality*

Those items of least importance to survey participants in 2011 were *Community Pride* and *Recreational Opportunities*. This list is fairly similar to the one generated from the 2002 survey results, with the exception of *Community Pride*, which decreased significantly in importance from 2002, and *Stores and Businesses*, *Roads*, *Transportation and Parking*, and *City Services*, which rose significantly in importance from the original survey. The increased importance placed on *City Services* is understandable given the recent reductions in State and Federal aid that have led to cuts in local government operations. However, the simultaneously high prioritization of *Cost of Living* and *City Services* poses a challenge for Lowell at a time when municipal resources are diminishing, as it is difficult to deliver public services at a high quality without sufficient tax revenue.

Base=800	% Top Three Box (8 to 10)	Mean
2011		
Police and Safety	91	9.2
Cost of Living	79	8.6
Neighborhood Character	78	8.5
City Services	77	8.5
Schools	77	8.5
Environmental Quality	<u>76</u>	<u>8.4</u>
Housing	73	8.2
Roads, Transportation and Parking	73	8.2
Job Opportunities	68	7.9
Ethnic and Racial Equality	67	7.9
Stores and Businesses	66	7.9
Public Health	<u>64</u>	<u>7.8</u>
Community Pride	59	7.5
Recreational Opportunities	58	7.5

Base=1,001	% Top Three Box (8 to 10)	Mean
2002		
Police and Safety	88	9.1
Schools	80	8.7
Neighborhood Character	76	8.5
Cost of Living	76	8.4
Environmental Quality	<u>75</u>	<u>8.4</u>
Housing	71	8.2
City Services	70	8.1
Community Pride	68	8.1
Job Opportunities	67	8.0
Roads, Transportation and Parking	66	8.0
Ethnic and Racial Equality	<u>65</u>	<u>7.9</u>
Stores and Businesses	59	7.7
Recreational Opportunities	56	7.4

Stated Quality of Life Improvements

In addition to ranking a list of items by importance, survey participants were provided with an opportunity to generate their own list of three items that, if improved, would positively impact their quality of life. While there is no direct means of comparison with prior data, participants in 2002 were asked to list a single item that would improve their quality of life, and so many parallels can be drawn. Across the 653 participants who responded to this question in 2011, approximately twenty-five general themes arose, fifteen of which are listed in the following table.

Issues were consolidated into broader categories. For instance, many participants mentioned sidewalk repairs, where as others mentioned potholes or bridges. All these issues were combined under “Public Infrastructure”. On the whole, the issues mentioned most frequently aligned closely with the participants’ stated aspects of importance and with priority quality of life issues of 2002. *Public Safety, Public Infrastructure, Schools, City Services, and Lowering Taxes* were all ranked highly in terms of their importance in 2011. *Public Safety, Jobs, and Schools* were also among the top five issues raised in the 2002 response. Other items mentioned that were not among the top fifteen included in the accompanying table are *Snow removal, Parking, Protecting the environment, Availability of housing, Improved water quality, Public health improvements, and Improved lighting*.

Top 15 Stated Quality of Life Issues to Improve	Rank	Respondents
Public Safety	1	228
Public Infrastructure (road/sidewalk repairs)	2	139
Schools	3	134
Downtown Shopping/Variety of Entertainment	4	115
Job Opportunities	5	108
Parks and Recreation	6	97
Traffic Flow	7	93
Trash & Recycling	8	76
Positive Activities for Young People	9	72
Cost of Living	10	59
Alternative Transportation Options (Bike/Bus)	11	50
Housing Quality	12	42
Business Development	13	39
Information Access & Community Engagement	14	33
Housing Affordability	15	32

Satisfaction with Living in Lowell

Survey participants were asked to rank their overall satisfaction with Lowell on a scale from 1 to 10. Generally, participants in 2011 were happy to be living in Lowell. Slightly more than half of participants (55%) rated Lowell highly as a place to live (rating it an 8, 9 or 10). 75% of participants rated Lowell as a 7 or higher. Results were similar in 2002, with 54% of respondents rating Lowell Highly (as an 8, 9 or 10).

Base=800	% Satisfied to Very Satisfied (8-10)	% Neutral to Dissatisfied (1-7)	Mean
Total Residents	55	45	7

Across Lowell's primary ethnic groups, Caucasian and Latino survey participants in 2011 were most satisfied with the city. African and African- American participants were slightly less satisfied than these two groups, and Asians were least satisfied of all four groups.

Base=776	Base	% Satisfied to Very Satisfied (8-10)	% Neutral to Dissatisfied (1-7)	Mean
Latino	142	59	41	7.6
Caucasian	484	56	44	7.5
African & African-American	48*	48	52	7.1
Asian	102	41	59	7.1

*Caution: small sample size.

As the age of survey participants increased in 2011, so did participants' overall satisfaction with Lowell as a place to live, a trend that matches the 2002 survey data.

Less than 40% of residents under 30 years of age ranked Lowell highly (8-10), where as residents over 70 years of age ranked Lowell an 8 out of 10, on average.

Base=749	Base	% Satisfied to Very Satisfied (8-10)	% Neutral to Dissatisfied (1-7)	Mean
Under 30	59	37	63	6.7
30 - 49	251	46	54	7.1
50 - 69	299	59	41	7.7
70 and Older	140	71	29	8.1

While the average response of residents earning between \$30,000 and \$100,000 in 2011 is nearly the same (approximately 7.5 out of 10), those earning more than \$100,000 report the lowest rates of satisfaction with the city. Residents earning \$30,000 or less, rate Lowell only slightly better than those in the highest income bracket, and less favorably than those who earn \$30,000 - \$100,000. Those rating Lowell most favorably earn between \$30,000 - \$74,999.

Base=651	Base	% Satisfied to Very Satisfied (8-10)	% Neutral to Dissatisfied (1-7)	Mean
Under \$30,000	225	53	47	7.3
\$30,000 - \$49,999	163	60	40	7.6
\$50,000 - 74,999	85	53	47	7.6
\$75,000 - 100,000	79	57	43	7.5
Over \$100,000	99	41	59	7.1

There was quite a variety in city ranking amongst the different neighborhoods. Although downtown residents felt quite favorably about Lowell in 2002, with 69% of survey

participants ranking the city as an 8, 9 or 10, those currently living in the downtown do not report the same level of fondness. The Acre, which is comprised largely of Latino residents, ranked the city reasonably well compared with other groups. These findings align with the ethnicity data rankings. Centralville and the Highlands, which have each been the focus of the City Manager's Neighborhood Initiative over the past two years, also ranked the city relatively well compared to other groups. On average, Back Central residents ranked the city least favorably. It is important to note, however, that the sample size was relatively small for this neighborhood.

Base=790	Base	% Satisfied to Very Satisfied (8-10)	% Neutral to Dissatisfied (1-7)	Mean
Belvidere	121	58	42	7.4
Highlands	220	58	42	7.6
Acre	52*	56	44	7.8
Centralville	137	55	45	7.5
Pawtucketville	126	55	45	7.4
Sacred Heart &				
South Lowell	72	49	51	7.2
Back Central	29*	41	59	6.8
Downtown	33*	39	61	7.2

*Caution: small sample size.

Lowell's Performance

Survey participants were asked to rate the city's performance on a series of forty different civic items, twenty-nine of which were reassigned from the original survey conducted in 2002. In order to ensure that the concept of sustainability was fully addressed through the 2011 survey instrument, 11 additional items, including *Incentives*

for *Energy efficiency*, *Flood management*, and *Air quality*, were also incorporated. All of these newly incorporated items are marked with an asterisk in the table on page 35.

While there was quite a range in the ratings, at least 50% of survey participants in 2011 ranked 18 (nearly half) of the items very highly (an 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale), and at least 70% of residents felt the city was performing exceptionally well on *A city that preserves its historic places*, *Good trash removal*, and *Plenty of public events and festivals*. These items were also ranked highly by respondents of the 2002 survey. Among other items of high ranking in both survey groups were *Good recycling program*, and *Plenty of cultural activities*.

Items that were ranked favorably by fewer than one third of participants in 2011 included *Traffic that moves freely through town*, *Lots of job opportunities in the city*, *Well-maintained roads and sidewalks*, *Stores in my neighborhood that meet my basic needs*, *Streets and Walkways designed to keep accidents from happening*, *Reasonable property taxes*, and *Convenient pathways for pedestrians and bicycles*. The majority of these items were also ranked least favorably by survey participants in 2002.

2011	% Top 3 Box (8-10)	% Bottom 3 Box (1-3)	Mean
A city that preserves its historic places	78	2	8.4
Good trash removal	71	5	8
Plenty of public events and festivals	71	3	8.2
Plenty of cultural activities	66	4	7.9
Good recycling program	66	7	7.8
Good quality drinking water	58	7	7.4
Neighbors that get along well	57	8	7.4
Not feeling crowded in my neighborhood	55	12	7.1
Good public transportation	54	6	7.4
Air Quality	54	5	7.3
Information is communicated with modern technologies	53	8	7.2
Good variety of stores downtown	53	13	7
Parks and recreational areas that meet my needs	52	8	7.2
Good public schools	52	7	7.2
Public health programs meet needs	52	7	7.2
A place where I feel safe	51	8	7.2

2011	% Top 3 Box (8-10)	% Bottom 3 Box (1-3)	Mean
Community Pride	50	7	7.2
Residents are well-informed about city services and activities	49	11	6.9
Downtown restaurants and cafes open later in the evening	48	8	7.1
Good snow removal	47	13	6.2
Neighbors that trust each other	47	15	6.8
Flood management	45	8	6.9
A clean and attractive city	42	10	6.7
Plenty of opportunities to have my voice heard	42	11	6.6
Good selection of housing that I can afford	42	12	6.6
My neighborhood gets its fair share of services	42	14	6.6
Everyone is treated fairly by city officials	42	17	6.4
Residential housing is well-maintained	41	7	6.8
Access to professional training	40	11	6.6
Buildings are well maintained	39	7	6.6
Lots of positive activities for children and teens	38	11	6.5
Enough parking	36	17	6.1
Incentives for energy efficiency	34	15	6.2
Convenient pathways for pedestrians and bicycles	33	14	6.2
Reasonable property taxes	33	19	5.9
Streets and walkways designed to keep accidents from happening	32	16	6.1
Stores in my neighborhood that meet my basic needs	31	18	5.8
Well-maintained roads and sidewalks	28	21	5.7
Traffic that moves freely through town	22	22	5.5
Lots of job opportunities for me in the city	18	25	5.1

2002	% Top 3 Box (8-10)	% Bottom 3 Box (1-3)	Mean
A city that preserves its historic places	71	3	8.2
Good trash removal	71	5	8.1
Plenty of public events and festivals	68	4	8.0
Good recycling program	60	6	7.7
Plenty of cultural activities	60	5	7.7
A place where I feel safe	58	6	7.5
A police presence in my neighborhood	55	9	7.3
Not feeling crowded in my neighborhood	54	10	7.2
Neighbors that get along well	53	8	7.4
Good public transportation	51	5	7.4

2002	% Top 3 Box (8-10)	% Bottom 3 Box (1-3)	Mean
Parks and recreational areas that meet my needs	50	7	7.1
Good snow removal	49	10	7.0
Stores in my neighborhood that meet my basic needs	49	13	6.8
Good public schools	48	6	7.3
Residents are well informed about the city	47	10	7.0
Everyone is treated fairly by city officials	43	10	6.9
Residential housing is well maintained	43	8	6.9
Lots of positive activities for children and teens	42	9	6.9
A clean and attractive city	42	8	6.9
Good quality drinking water	42	13	6.7
No noticeable drug activity	41	16	6.5
English classes are offered at convenient times and place	38	4	7.4
Streets and walkways are well designed	33	11	6.4
Convenient pathways for pedestrians and bicycles	33	13	6.2
Downtown restaurants and cafes open later in the evening	32	12	6.3
Well maintained roads and sidewalks	32	15	6.1
Traffic that moves freely through town	31	16	6.1
Good selection of housing that I can afford	31	18	5.9
Enough parking	29	20	5.8
Reasonable property taxes	28	16	6.0
A good variety of stores downtown	28	16	5.9
Lots of job opportunities for me in the city	22	19	5.7

Analyzing the performance ratings by demographic breakdown provides further insight into the sentiment of residents.

Public Safety

Public Safety was among the items rated less positively by survey participants. While Latino (7.3) and Caucasian residents (7.2) rated the city most favorably as a place where they feel safe, Africans and African Americans (6.9), and Asians (6.8) rated it least favorably. As age increased, so did the performance ratings on this item, with those over 70 reporting 7.8 out of 10, on average. Back Central residents (6.6) rated this item least highly of all neighborhoods, where as those living in Belvidere (7.8), rated it most highly. Those in the highest income bracket, earning over \$100,000, reported the lowest

performance on this item (6.6), where as those earning between \$75,000 - \$100,000 reported the highest (7.4).

Job Opportunities

Given the state of the economy, it was not surprising that unemployed residents (4.5) rated the item relating to employment opportunities less favorably than those that were either retired (5.1) or employed (5.2). Those aged 30-49 and over 70 (5.4) tended to rate job availability more favorably than those under 30 (4.7) or 50-69 (4.8). Education was not a determinant of performance on this item, as those without a college degree reported the same score as those with a degree (5.2). Africans, African Americans (4.8), Caucasians (5.1), Asians (5.2), and Latinos (5.3) all reported similarly on this issue.

Cost of Living

Performance on cost of living was relatively low across the board, ranging from a 5.6 score for those under 30 years of age to a 6.0 score for those 30-49. On the whole, as income increased, so did the ratings for *Reasonable property taxes*. The one exception lay within the resident income bracket earning over \$100,000 (6.1), who rated the item less well than all those earning upwards of \$30,000.

Schools

Public schools were rated better by those who had children attending them (6.9) than by those who did not (5.8). Africans and African Americans rated this item least highly of all ethnic groups (6.5), followed by Asians (7.1), Caucasians (7.2) and Latinos (7.4).

Housing Quality

Across various demographic groups, housing maintenance scores were fairly similar. Home owners and renters, on average, rated this item's performance as a 6.9 out of 10. Africans and African Americans rated the item least favorably (6.4), where as Caucasians rated it most favorably (6.9). Those living in Belvidere were most impressed with the city's performance on this item, rating it a 7.3. By contrast, those in Back Central and Centralville were at the lower end of the spectrum, each with a 6.2 rating.

Housing Affordability

Not surprisingly, those residents in the lowest income bracket, earning under \$30,000, reported the least favorably of all residents on the availability of affordable housing options (6.1). Those earning \$50,000 – 74,999 rated this item most favorably (7.3). Older residents over 70 (7.0), felt the city was performing better on this item than did other age groups, while the youngest residents rated this item considerably less favorably (6.1). Caucasian residents rated this item most favorably (6.8), followed by Asians (6.6), Latinos (6.3) and Africans and African Americans (6.0).

Energy Efficiency

When rating the item *Incentives that encourage energy efficiency*, those with a college degree or more (6.2) rated the city's performance lower than those with less than this degree (5.6). As income increased, the ratings on this item decreased from 6.7 to 5.1. Caucasians rated this item most favorably (6.3), where as Africans and African Americans rated it least favorably (5.6).

Recycling

There was considerable variety in the ratings of the city's recycling program. While Caucasian residents felt the city was performing very well (8.1), Africans and African Americans felt much less so (6.5). Latinos (7.5) and Asians (7.8), fell somewhere in between. Downtown residents rated this item least favorably of all neighborhoods (5.9), where as those living in the Highlands and Belvidere rated it most highly (8.2 and 8.3, respectively).

Equity of Services Provided

On the item, *My neighborhood gets its fair share of programs and services*, Sacred Heart and South Lowell (5.5) rated this item least favorably. The Highlands (6.8) and the Acre (6.9) were among the higher scoring neighborhoods in the city, and Belvidere rated this item most favorably (7.5).

Opportunities for Civic Engagement

Of all ethnic groups, Africans and African Americans (5.8) reported the greatest need of having more places to express themselves and have their voices heard, followed by Latinos and Asians (6.3). Caucasians (6.9) felt they had the most opportunity of all ethnic groups to express their opinions. Those living in Lowell for their entire lives (6.9) felt they had more opportunities to express their views than did those who had moved here more recently (6.5). As the age of participants increased, so did their ability to voice their perspectives. There was also a significant correlation between age and performance on this item, with those under 30 rating it as a 6.1 on average, and those over the age of 70 rating it as a 7.6.

Public Transportation

Public Transportation performance scores varied significantly across ethnic groups, with Caucasians reporting a score of 5.5 followed by Africans and African Americans (6.5), Latinos (7.2), and Asians (7.3). Those aged 50-69 rated this item least favorably of all age groups (7.3), where as those over 70 rated it most favorably (7.6). Those earning under \$30,000 rated the system best (7.7), where as those earning \$75,000 - \$100,000 rated it worst (7.0).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Across the board, residents felt the city's performance on creating pathways for bicycles and pedestrians was low. Those earning over \$100,000 were least satisfied (5.2), where as those earning under \$30,000 and between \$50,000 – 74,999 were most satisfied (6.5). There was little difference in terms of ratings by age. Those aged 50-69 (6.1) were at the lower end of the spectrum, where as those 70 and over were at the higher end (6.6). Asians (6.0) rated bike and pedestrian amenities least favorably where as Latinos rated it most favorably (6.5).

Roads and Sidewalks

When it came to other transportation and infrastructure needs, such as road and sidewalk maintenance, there was little variability in terms of average reported responses across multiple demographics. Downtown residents rated the road and sidewalk

maintenance least favorably (5.2), followed closely by Sacred Heart, Back Central and South Lowell. Those living in the Acre, although not providing a much higher rating, provided the best average rating of all neighborhoods (6.7). Ratings are similarly low across all age groups, with residents under 30 at the lowest end of the spectrum (5.5) and those over 70 at the highest end (6.2).

Public Festivals

Performance on public festivals was rated exceptionally well by several different demographic groups. Downtown residents (7.7) tended to rate performance on this item slightly lower than other groups, where as Belvidere residents rated this category most favorably of all residents (8.7). Ratings were similarly favorable when broken down by age and ethnicity. Those over 70 rated festival performance the best of all age groups (8.6), where as those under 30 rated it least favorably (7.1). Caucasian residents, on average, felt public festival performance was highest of all ethnic groups (8.3), followed by Asians (8.2), Latino (7.7), and African/African Americans (7.6). Those with children under 18 (8.2) rated the city's performance on this item similarly to those without (8).

Public Parks

In analyzing the performance ratings of other types of recreational opportunities, such as public parks, there was somewhat greater variation in responses. Those over the age of 70 (8.2) rated this item most highly, where as those under 30 rated it least highly of all age groups (5.9). Latino residents rated parks least favorably of all ethnicities (6.9), where as Caucasians rated them most favorably (7.3). While Belvidere residents rated this item a 7.8, on average, those living in Back Central and the Acre each rated the city's performance on parks as a 6.7. Residents without children (7.2) rated this item more favorably than those with children (6.9).

Importance Versus Performance

Although it is useful for a city to gauge the relative importance of an issue such as housing or cost of living amongst a variety of other quality of life issues, measuring how a city's performance on those issues compares to their relative importance is even more telling. As a means by which to compare importance to performance on the civic items

addressed, assumptions are made about how certain performance areas match the more general importance areas. The table on page 32 outlines which items in 2011 fall under which broader category of importance. The table on page 35 summarizes the relationship between importance and performance on all civic items in both 2002 and 2011.

Some categories, such as *Public Safety* and *Public Health* are each aligned with one specific issue only, where as other categories contain up to six issues. As DPD was limited in terms of the length of the survey instrument, and as it sought to prioritize items relating to sustainability, specific issues posed to residents had to be prioritized.

Since the Lowell Police Department recently conducted a citywide community survey detailing resident sentiment regarding public safety, DPD felt there was already sufficient data available on this topic to inform the Sustainability Plan and therefore elected to eliminate two items from the *Public Safety* importance category. The issues from this category that were replaced by issues related to sustainability were: *No noticeable drug activity* and *A police presence in my neighborhood*.

Given the emerging viewpoint that health and well-being are directly related to one's social, economic and physical environment, a question related to public health was introduced in 2011. The broad category of Public Health had not been addressed at all through the 2002 survey instrument.

Importance Area	Performance Area
Police, Fire and Public Safety	A place I feel safe
Public Health Programs	Public health programs that meet my basic needs
Roads, Public Transportation and Parking	Roads and sidewalks that are maintained
Roads, Public Transportation and Parking	Enough parking
Roads, Public Transportation and Parking	Convenient pathways for pedestrians and bicycles
Roads, Public Transportation and Parking	Traffic that moves freely through the city
Roads, Public Transportation and Parking	Streets and walkways designed to keep accidents from happening
Roads, Public Transportation and Parking	Public transportation
Ethnic and Racial Equality	Everyone is treated fairly by city officials

Importance Area	Performance Area
City Services	My neighborhood gets its fair share of city programs and services
City Services	I am well informed about city services and activities
City Services	Information about city services is communicated using modern technologies
City Services	Snow removal
City Services	Trash removal
City Services	Recycling program
Housing	Not feeling crowded in my neighborhood
Housing	Residential housing is well maintained
Housing	Good selection of housing that I can afford
Recreational Opportunities	Parks and recreational areas that meet my needs
Recreational Opportunities	Plenty of cultural activities
Recreational Opportunities	Plenty of public events and festivals
Recreational Opportunities	Lots of positive activities for children and teens
Recreational Opportunities	Downtown restaurants and cafes open later in the evening
Job Opportunities	Lots of job opportunities for me in the city
Job Opportunities	Access to training for professional growth
Schools	Good public schools
Stores and Businesses	A good variety of stores downtown
Stores and Businesses	Stores in my neighborhood that meet my basic shopping needs
Cost of Living	Reasonable property taxes
Neighborhood Character	A clean and attractive city
Neighborhood Character	A city that preserves its historic places
Neighborhood Character	Buildings that are well maintained
Environmental Quality	Drinking water quality
Environmental Quality	Air quality
Environmental Quality	Incentives that encourage energy efficiency
Environmental Quality	Flood management
Community Involvement	Community pride
Community Involvement	Neighbors that trust each other
Community Involvement	Neighbors that get along well
Community Involvement	Plenty of opportunities to have my voice heard

While the original survey instrument addressed only one specific performance criteria under the *Environmental quality* category of importance, the revised survey contained four. In addition to asking residents how well the city was performing on *Drinking water quality*, DPD also posed questions regarding performance on *Flood management*, *Incentives that encourage energy efficiency*, and *Air quality*.

When comparing attribute importance to Lowell's performance on those attributes, there are some areas where Lowell is not performing up to the expectation of its residents, and others where it is exceeding expectations. When comparing an item's relative importance to its relative performance, several items show a performance gap. In other words, there are instances in which an item's importance rank is higher than its performance rank and vice versa.

Those items with the largest negative gap between their reported importance and performance are:

- *Buildings that are well maintained*
- *Reasonable property taxes*
- *A place I feel safe*
- *Traffic that moves freely through the City*
- *Lots of job opportunities for me in the city*
- *Roads and sidewalks that are maintained*
- *Snow Removal*
- *Incentives that encourage energy efficiency*

With the exception of *Lots of job opportunities for me in the city*, all of these items fell under broad categories that at least 70% of residents reported to be very important (ranked as an 8, 9 or 10 out of 10). While *Incentives that encourage energy efficiency* performs moderately compared to some other items, because of the relative importance of Environmental Quality, the gap between its importance and performance becomes quite large.

Items offering the greatest positive importance to performance relationship include:

- *Plenty of public events and festivals*
- *Plenty of cultural activities*
- *Neighbors that get along well*
- *Parks and recreational areas that meet my needs*
- *Community Pride*

- *Downtown restaurants and cafes open later in the evening*
- *Public health programs that meet my basic needs*
- *Neighbors that trust each other*
- *A city that preserves its historic places*

In other words, residents report that Lowell is exceeding expectations in terms of its performance on these items. That being said, some residents may not consider items such as *Downtown restaurants open later in the evening* and *Public festivals* to be related to *Recreational Activities*, the broader category of importance under which they were originally listed. Given the stated need for more downtown entertainment options and more public parks as primary factors that would improve residents' quality of life, these issues merit further consideration.

Compared with 2002 survey results, residents appeared to have many similar sentiments regarding how well their expectations were being met. In both 2002 and 2011, respondents felt that the city should improve public safety and make property taxes more reasonable, while they felt satisfied with historic preservation and the cultural activities available.

Community Characteristics	2002 Survey Results			2011 Survey Results		
	Importance Index	Performance Index	Gap	Importance Index	Performance Index	Gap
*Buildings that are well maintained				108	83	-25
Reasonable property taxes	107	87	-20	109	86	-23
A place I feel safe	124	109	-15	126	105	-21
Traffic that moves freely through the city	93	89	-4	101	81	-20
Lots of job opportunities for me in the city	95	83	-12	94	75	-19
Roads and sidewalks that are maintained	93	89	-4	101	84	-17
Snow removal	99	102	3	107	91	-16
*Incentives that encourage energy efficiency				106	91	-15
Streets and walkways designed to keep accidents from happening	93	93	0	101	89	-12
Enough parking	93	84	-9	101	90	-11
A clean and attractive city	107	100	-7	108	97	-11
*My neighborhood gets its fair share of city programs and services				107	96	-11
Convenient pathways for pedestrians and bicycles	93	90	-3	101	91	-10
Stores in my neighborhood that meet my basic shopping needs	83	99	16	92	85	-7

Community Characteristics	2002 Survey Results	2011 Survey Results					
	Importance Index	Performance Index	Gap	Importance Index	Performance Index	Gap	
Good selection of housing I can afford	100	86	-14	102	97	-5	
*Flood management				106	101	-5	
Good public schools	113	106	-7	108	105	-3	
Residential housing is well maintained	100	100	0	102	100	-2	
*Information about city services is communicated using modern technologies				107	105	-2	
Everyone is treated fairly by city officials	92	100	8	93	93	0	
*Air quality				106	107	1	
*Access to professional training				94	96	2	
Drinking water quality	106	97	-9	106	108	2	
Not feeling crowded in my neighborhood	107	105	-2	102	105	3	
Public transportation	93	107	14	101	108	7	
Recycling program	99	112	13	107	115	8	
Good variety of stores downtown	83	86	3	92	103	11	
Trash removal	99	118	19	107	118	11	
*Plenty of opportunities to have my voice heard				83	97	14	
Lots of positive activities for children and teens	79	100	21	81	96	15	
A city that preserves its historic places	107	119	12	108	123	15	
*Neighbors that trust each other				83	99	16	
*Public health programs that meet my basic needs				89	106	17	
Downtown restaurants and cafes open later in the evening	83	92	9	81	103	22	
*Community pride				83	105	22	
Parks and recreational areas that meet my needs	79	103	24	81	106	25	
Neighbors that get along well	107	107	0	83	109	26	
Plenty of cultural activities	79	112	33	81	115	34	
Plenty of public events and festivals	79	116	37	81	119	38	

Resource Trade-Offs

In the survey, interviewers explained how “a city often needs to choose how it spends its resources on issues for its citizens”. Given this introduction, residents reported what trade-offs they were willing to make on development issues in Lowell. While many of the 9 trade-off questions were similar in scope to those asked in the 2002 survey, several new questions were incorporated into this section to specifically address the issue of sustainability. When applicable, survey responses from the 2001 survey are compared with the 2011 results.

1. City Service Improvements vs. Property Taxes

The trade-off question regarding city services was reworded slightly from its version in the original survey. In 2002, participants were asked whether they would rather “make the city look better, but charge more in taxes,” or “keep the city the way it is, without charging higher taxes.”

City Service Improvements vs. Property Taxes	% 2011	% 2002
Increasing city services, but increasing taxes to do so	16	35
Maintaining current city services, while controlling tax increases	80	60

Although residents in 2002 and 2011 are in agreement that controlling for tax increases is a main priority, participants in 2002 reported a greater willingness to pay higher taxes for improved city services than they have in 2011. In 2002, those moving to the city more recently (since 2000) were considerably more likely to be willing to raise taxes to improve the city’s appearance than those who had lived in Lowell for their entire lives. Although the question had changed slightly, these findings were consistent with survey participant reports in 2011.

2011 results were examined across a number of additional demographic variables.

African and African American (28%) residents in 2011 were more apt to want city services increased than Latinos (18%), Asians (14%), or Caucasians (17%), though all groups favored controlling for tax increases as opposed to raising taxes. On average, as participant age increased, the desire to pay higher taxes for services decreased.

Retirees (13%) were less likely to prioritize tax increases than those who were employed (48%). Renters (25%) were more willing to pay higher taxes than home-owners (13%).

Those earning over \$100,000 were least likely to want taxes increased (13%), though there was no direct correlation between income and the desire for increasing taxes to improve services.

2. Transportation & Mobility

Where as survey participants in 2002 were asked whether they would rather “make the city easier to drive by widening roads and removing stops” or “slow speeds to protect people and quiet neighborhoods”, to shift the focus to include alternative means of transportation in the discussion, this question was revised slightly for the 2011 survey instrument.

Transportation & Mobility	% 2011	% 2002
Making it easier for cars to move through the city	42	19
Making it easier and safer for bicycles and pedestrians to share streets and protect quiet neighborhoods	54	77

Although the questions asked in 2002 and 2011 do differ, their scope is sufficiently similar for meaningful comparisons to be made. A decade ago, residents were much less concerned about moving easily through the city than they were about protecting quiet neighborhoods. Now, protecting quiet neighborhoods and promoting alternative means of transportation for bikes and pedestrians is still the main priority, but traffic concerns appear to have increased. In 2002, those residents who had moved to Lowell more recently (since 2000) were more likely to favor mobility than those living in the city their entire lives. Results were similar in 2011.

Asian residents in 2002 reported being least likely of all ethnic groups to desire slower speeds in quiet neighborhoods (65%). There was a switch in 2011, although there was very little variability in the reported sentiments across ethnic groups. Of all ethnic groups in 2011, Asian residents (42%) were the least likely to desire making it easier to drive through the city. Caucasians, on average, were most likely to favor automobile mobility (44%).

In 2011, employed residents (46%) were more likely than retired (41%) or unemployed (33%) residents to support increased mobility for cars. Residents over 50 years of age were less likely than younger residents to make the city easier for driving. This data was not analyzed by the consultant in 2002, so there is no direct means of comparison by age or employment status.

3. Housing Options vs. Open Space

Density can be a controversial issue in Lowell, as in other urban communities. In 2002, survey participants were asked whether they would rather “make houses cheaper by building more, but with more density” or “create space by removing buildings, causing housing costs to increase.” Although the trade-off options were altered somewhat for the 2011 instrument, the general theme remains the same.

Housing Options vs. Open Space	% 2011	% 2002
Increasing housing options by building more housing, but with more people in each neighborhood	33	48
Encouraging more open space in neighborhoods, but reduce housing options	63	44

On the whole, residents in 2011 seem to feel more of their housing needs are met than residents did in 2002. Having more housing options was less of a priority in Back Central than in any other neighborhood (26%). On average, renters (52%) were significantly more likely than home-owners to want more housing options (25%). Of all ethnic groups, Africans and African Americans (61%) were most likely to desire an increase in housing options. Caucasians were least likely (29%) of all groups. As income increased, the desire for housing options decreased.

4. Neighborhood vs. Downtown

While a greater percentage of residents preferred that beautification efforts be focused in their neighborhoods versus downtown in both 2002 and 2011, the gap appears to

have narrowed over the past decade, with an increasing number of residents wanting to see greater improvements to the downtown.

Neighborhood vs. Downtown	% 2011	% 2002
Make Lowell look more attractive by improving the downtown and city gateways	43	36
Make your neighborhood look more attractive by improving residential areas	55	60

In 2002, Asian residents were most likely to desire improvements to the city's downtown (53%). In 2011, Asian (42%) and Latino (39%) residents are least likely to see the city make the downtown more attractive, where as Caucasians (46%) are most likely to desire these improvements. Those living in Belvidere (52%) are most likely to desire improvements to the downtown, where as Back Central residents are least likely to favor these improvements (30%).

5. Recreation Improvements

The question regarding recreation improvements remained largely unchanged from its 2002 version. With the exception of option 3: "more open space for passive parks", the wording remained the same in the 2011 survey. Where as respondents in 2002 tended to favor options 1 and 2, those responding to the survey in 2011 voiced a much greater need for more trails and open space.

Recreation Improvements	% 2011	% 2002
Add more swing sets and play equipment in parks for younger children	26	35
Add more athletic fields in parks such as basketball and volleyball courts	31	35
Add more open space for trails, natural areas, and conservation land	40	26

Asian residents in 2002 were most likely to prioritize play equipment for parks as opposed to groups with other backgrounds. In 2011, Asians (46%) and Caucasians (45%) were most likely of all ethnic groups to prioritize open space and trails. Of all groups, Africans and African Americans (48%) were most in favor of athletic fields and courts. Latinos (35%) most wanted to see play equipment for younger children.

Several neighborhoods, including Back Central, Centralville, Downtown, Pawtucketville, and South Lowell all prioritized open space and trails over the other options. Downtown (67%) prioritized open space more than any other neighborhood. Of all neighborhoods, Belvidere (35%) was most likely to prioritize play equipment for younger children, though many other neighborhoods ranked close behind. The Sacred Heart residents (44%) were most apt to favor athletic fields of all neighborhoods.

All age groups in 2011 prioritized open space over athletic courts and play equipment, though residents under 30 years of age reported the least variability in their choices. 37% of residents under 30 favored open space, where as 32% favored athletic fields and 30% favored play equipment. Those with children (66%) were more likely to want athletic fields than those without (33%). Those without children (39%) were more likely to want open space and trails than those with them (20%).

6. Neighborhood Character vs. Property Rights

Neighborhood character proved to be an issue of great importance to residents in 2002, and continues to be today. In preparation for the 2011 survey instrument, two different trade-off questions from the 2002 survey were combined. One question in the original survey asked participants to choose between “regulating construction to protect historic character” and “promoting construction with fewer restrictions”. The other question asked respondents to favor either “protecting quality of life by enforcing housing codes” or “protecting private property rights of owners”. These questions, which essentially addressed the same issue from differing angles, were re-worded so as to free up another question that could more directly address sustainability. While respondents in 2002 and

2011 both tended to favor the protection of neighborhood character over the promotion of private property rights, the gap between the two has narrowed over the past decade.

Neighborhood Character vs. Property Rights	% 2011	% 2002
Protect historic design and neighborhood character by regulating design and construction	56	63
Enhance private property rights by allowing an individual property owner to do what they want with their property	41	31

Latino residents in 2002 were the only ethnic group that preferred construction to regulation (52% vs. 45%). In 2011, results were the same. Latinos were least likely to want design and construction regulated (47%), where as Caucasians (62%) and Africans and African Americans (63%) were most likely to want neighborhood character preserved.

While retaining historic character in 2002 was more important to suburban residents (59%) than it was for those living in the inner-city (67%), responses were varied amongst neighborhoods in 2011. Downtown residents (84%) were most in favor of preserving neighborhood character of all neighborhoods, with many other neighborhoods (both urban and suburban) following closely in rank. Those with the highest level of income in 2002 were most apt to want construction regulated, and these results matched those of 2011 as well.

7. Economic Development vs. Neighborhood Character

Although protecting residential properties from commercial and industrial development is often a divisive issue, residents continued to prioritize economic development over the protection of residential areas in 2011, as they did in 2002. Given the recent economic downturn, the increased emphasis on job creation is not surprising. Though the wording

of this question changed somewhat since 2002, when participants were asked whether they'd prefer to have the city “create jobs by bringing development city-wide” or “protect residents by limiting development nearby”, the general trade-off issue remains the same.

Economic Development vs. Neighborhood Character	% 2011	% 2002
Encourage job creation by bringing industrial and commercial development to more areas of the city	54	50
Protect residential areas by restricting industrial and commercial development in most areas of the city	43	46

Asians were most likely of all ethnic groups in 2002 to favor economic development over the protection of quiet neighborhoods, and the results were similar in 2011, with Asians (64%) and Africans/African Americans (67%) being more apt to prioritize job creation than Caucasians (54%) or Latinos (52%).

Although both blue collar and white collar workers prefer job creation to neighborhood protection, blue collar workers in both 2002 and 2011 favored economic development most highly of all types of workers. Renters (61%) were more likely than home-owners (53%) in 2011 to want economic development in their neighborhoods.

8. Local Businesses vs. Chains

To further explore the trade-offs residents were willing to make in terms of their local economy, the 2011 survey instrument introduced a new question on whether to prioritize local or chain businesses. Increasingly, small businesses play a major role in creating and sustaining vibrant local economies, and so this issue was particularly relevant to address. Although there is no means of comparison with 2002 data, resident reports in 2011 suggest the need to continue to help small, local businesses thrive in the city.

Local vs. Big Businesses	% 2011	% 2002
Help small, locally owned businesses to grow in Lowell	67	-
Attract familiar national companies to the city	29	-

Of all ethnic groups, Asians (73%) and Africans/African Americans (73%) were most in favor of supporting local businesses over chains. Those earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000 (76%) were most in favor of assisting small enterprises than were those of other income brackets.

9. Environmental Considerations

A final trade-off question explored the extent to which residents prioritized the protection of our physical environment, an extremely pertinent issue given the city's focus on sustainability. Again, while no direct comparisons can be made to 2002 results, residents overwhelmingly favored protecting the physical environment over making policy decisions which could potentially harm it, even at a short-term cost.

Environmental Considerations	% 2011	% 2002
Pursue policies that protect the environment for long-term benefit even when there is an added short-term cost	81	-
Prioritize policies based on short-term cost even if they are not good for the environment and may not work in the long-term	14	-

While all ethnic groups were in favor of prioritizing policies that would protect the environment, Caucasians (89%) prioritized these policies most highly of all ethnic groups. Those participants with a college degree or more (88%) were also more likely to prioritize these types of policies than were those with fewer academic credentials (84%).

Participants with incomes between \$75,000 - \$100,000 (91%) were most apt of all residents to advocate for environmental protection.

Visioning Sessions



Overview

Public visioning sessions help establish an on-going dialogue between city officials and community stakeholders, and are therefore an integral component of a long-range planning process. Through the city's sustainability planning process, 20 officials from numerous city departments served as presenters, facilitators, and note-takers at five public visioning sessions. Transportation and translation

services (Spanish, Portuguese and Khmer) were made available upon request. All meetings were held at the Lowell Senior Center, which was selected for its centralized location, proximity to public transportation, and abundance of free parking.

A total of 160 residents, business owners and other community stakeholders attended the five topical sessions to share their views on how the city was performing and on what could be improved upon. At the end of each session, participants were given stickers and asked to vote on the issues that they felt were most important. All voting sheets were made publically available through the city's website after each meeting.

Major Themes

Each meeting centered on a different topic of interest, which was further divided into sub-groups for discussion purposes:

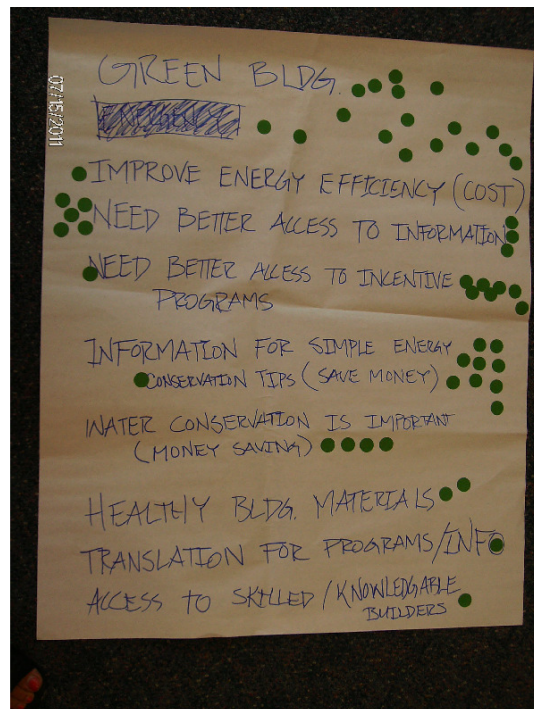
- **Housing & Public Services**
- **Transportation & Mobility**
- **Economic Development, & Workforce Investment & Institutional Partnerships**
- **Community Character, Engagement & Identity**
- **Open Space & Natural Resources**

For a complete listing of all questions asked in each sub-topic group, please see Appendix B. Summaries of each meeting are listed below.



HOUSING

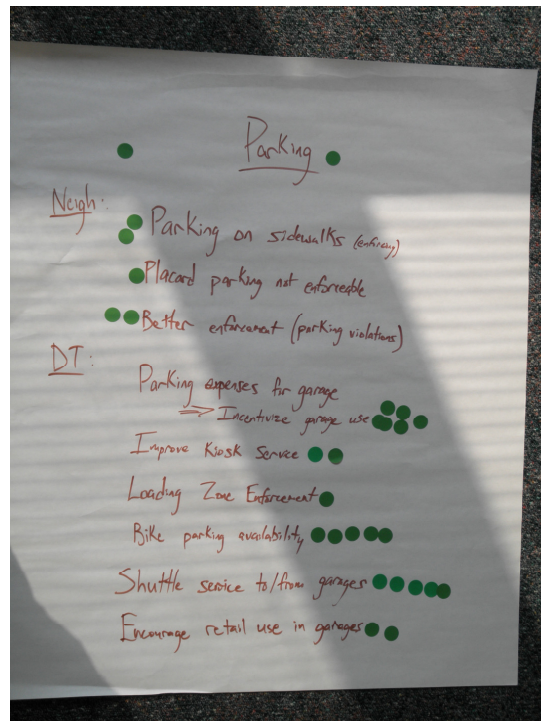
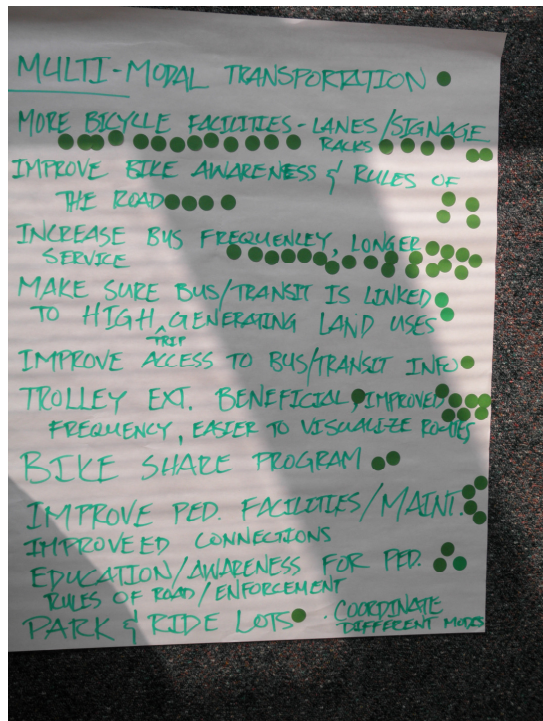
- Maintain a diversity of housing options so as to meet the needs of empty-nesters, working professionals, and families
- Create more high-quality, yet affordable housing options for students, young professionals and low-income residents
- Increase percentage of multi-family housing
- Encourage greater owner-occupancy rates
- Protect historic character of Lowell's downtown and neighborhoods
- Distribute housing types more evenly throughout the city
- Continue to prioritize code enforcement as a way to improve the overall quality of housing stock and support healthier homes
- Make translated information available and better educate residents about their rights and the services available
- Assist home-owners with maintenance through loan programs
- Decrease crime rates as high auto insurance is a deterrent to living in Lowell
- Incentivize and promote opportunities for energy efficiency improvements
- Educate the community about green building practices





PUBLIC SERVICES

- Increase police presence in the neighborhoods
- Establish ways for non-English speakers to communicate with City Departments
 - Improve maintenance of public infrastructure (sidewalks/roads)
 - Improve snow removal, particularly around Gallagher Terminal
- Improve trash collection in the neighborhoods and discourage illegal dumping
 - Expand city's recycling program to include all residences
- Provide incentives to encourage citywide recycling and composting practices
 - Establish a Recycling Drop-off Center in Lowell



TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Connections & Gateways

- Improve traffic light synchronization
- Improve signage at gateways and neighborhood entry points
- Improve appearance of gateways
- Ensure that sidewalks and streets are cleared of snow
- Limit one-way streets to avoid confusion downtown
- Transform the Lowell Connector into a Boulevard
- Enhance traffic-calming strategies along major corridors including route 38, 113, 110, and 133

Bicycles & Pedestrians

- **Make the city more bike-friendly by adding amenities (lanes, lockers, racks, etc)**
- **Implement a bike-share program**
- **Improve connections to regional trail networks**
- **Educate the public about bike safety and appropriate behavior**
- **Make the city more pedestrian-friendly by adding street trees, lighting, benches, pedestrian signals at crosswalks, etc**
- **Allow bikes on MBTA during peak hours**
- **Make streets more accessible for disabled residents**

Public Transportation

- **Improve the public bus system by extending hours of service, using smaller buses but more frequent stops, providing shelters, and making schedules more accessible**
- **Expand historic trolley system**

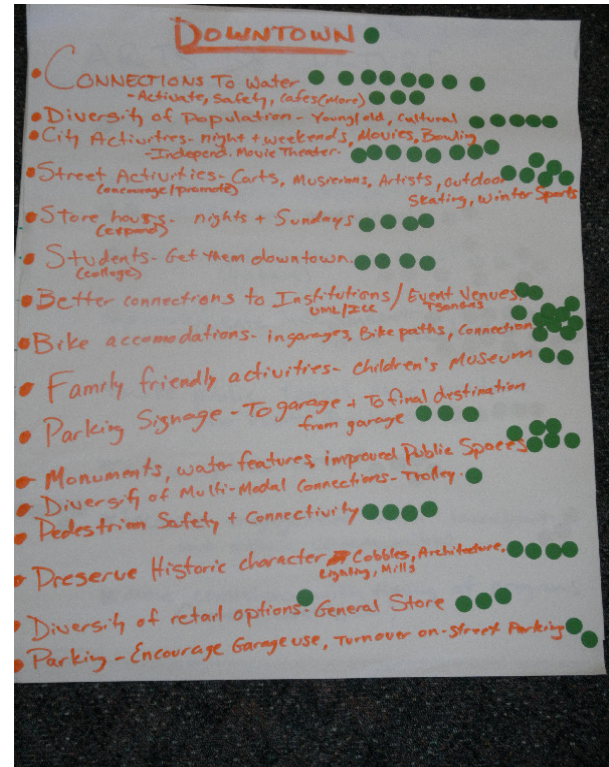
Parking

- **Introduce opportunities for Park & Ride to minimize traffic downtown**
- **Explore alternatives to neighborhood parking signs**
- **Create parking options that are not on sidewalks**
- **Reduce parking fees in public garages**
- **Improve appearance of garages to make them more welcoming**
- **Enforce loading zones so as not to deter economic development**
- **Educate about the parking kiosk system**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WORKFORCE INVESTMENT & INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Downtown Development

- Diversify shopping opportunities (movie theatre, record store, boutiques, independent book store)
- Extend store hours later in the evening
- Rent out vacant storefronts as galleries
- Improve connections to major venues (Tsongas Center and Ball Park)
- Increase the presence of UMass Lowell
- Develop more family and student-friendly events
- Close downtown streets once per month for street festivals
- Improve access to the waterfront
- Provide incentives to developers looking to build along the water
- Create better signage for garage parking
- Reduce parking garage fees
- Use empty parking lots for other purposes on the weekends
- Add electric vehicle charging stations downtown
- Place restrictions on delivery trucks and enforce loading zones
- Improve access for bikes
- Improve environment for pedestrians with street trees and benches
- Make improvements to accommodate disabled residents
- Improve plowing in the Winter
- Preserve historic character



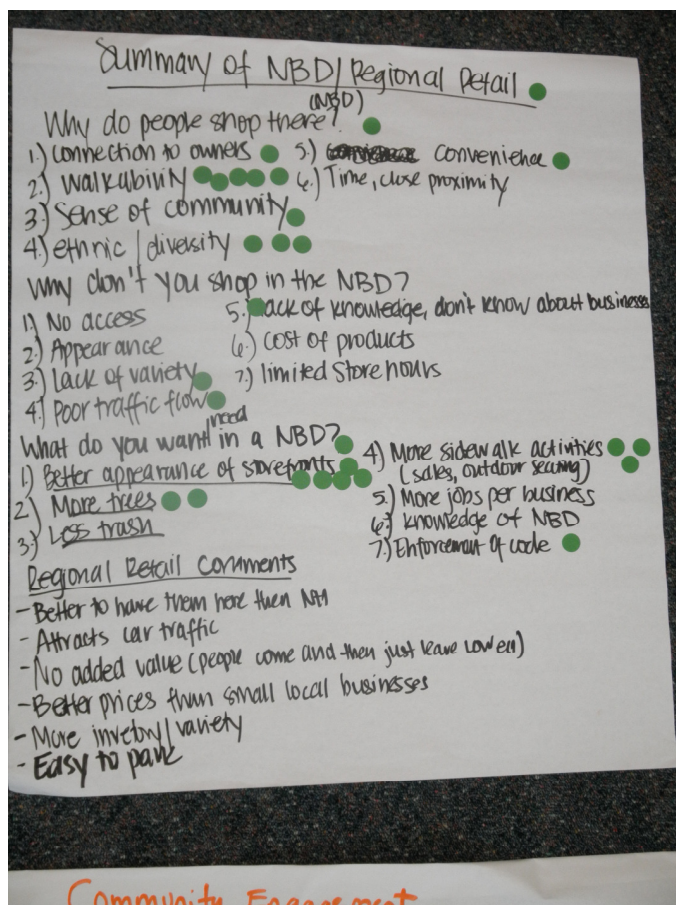


Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- Attract a highly skilled labor force
- Increase access to job training programs
- Improve public infrastructure to support economic growth
- Prioritize code enforcement to approve the appearance of businesses
- Expedite permitting process for businesses
- Develop incubator space
- Cultivate creativity
- Provide incentives for social entrepreneurs
- Create mentorship programs for young professionals and entrepreneurs
- Organize informal networking events and forums
- Encourage the use of co-/shared work spaces
- Prioritize Western Avenue as a center for innovation

Workforce Investment & Institutional Partnerships

- Diversify job opportunities (include health care, nanotech, low-income, youth, etc)
- Develop a solid workforce that includes both the public and private sector
- Find ways to retain young, talented students and artists
- Continue to promote Lowell as a college town
- Build trust between the city and businesses
- Strengthen partnerships between and among existing institutions
- Encourage non-profits and other institutions to better share resources
- Change the perception that Lowell is an unsafe place to relocate
- Refurbish older institutions such as churches for new uses



Neighborhood & Regional Business Development

- Improve storefronts/façade appearance
- Improve public infrastructure
- Diversify business types
- Support ethnic and family-run businesses
- Continue to support local businesses and keep resources in the community
- Create more parking options

COMMUNITY CHARACTER, ENGAGEMENT & IDENTITY



Neighborhood Character

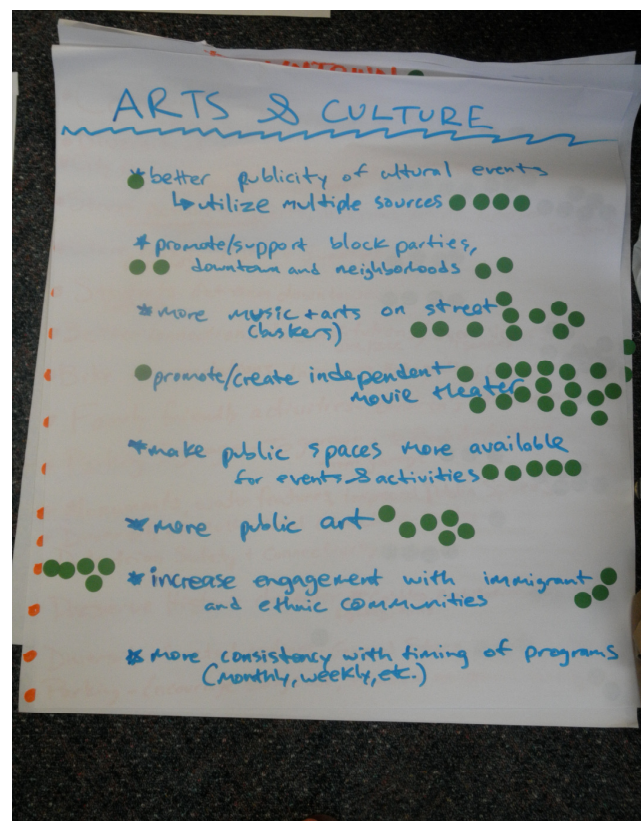
- Continue to enforce code violations
- Enhance neighborhood business districts
- Improve the appearance of neighborhoods and gateways
- Preserve unique character and history of each neighborhood
- Incorporate signage within each neighborhood to make it distinct
- Invest more city resources in Lowell's neighborhoods
- Incorporate more trees and green spaces into the landscape

Communication & Community Engagement

- Keep the public informed about small successes
- Translate materials into commonly spoken languages
- Continue use of E-Gov and encourage use of other such tools for more efficient and user-friendly communication with the public
- Revisit the city's marketing strategy to better reflect its vibrancy
- Expand use of social media and other new technologies
- Maintain more traditional outreach approaches such as newsletter mailings, newspaper ads, and updates through utility bills
- Increase engagement of younger populations and ethnic groups
- Adjust public meeting times to accommodate working families
- Continue to air public meetings on television and online through LTC

Arts & Culture

- Retain young and creative talent
- Improve outreach and awareness of events and activities
- Increase the presence of arts and cultural activities in the neighborhoods
- Balance neighborhood needs with arts and cultural focus
- Open a movie theatre downtown
- Establish more entertainment options that foster social interaction and build community
- More readily activate public spaces
- Organize more bike-friendly and "green" festivals



OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Environmental Considerations

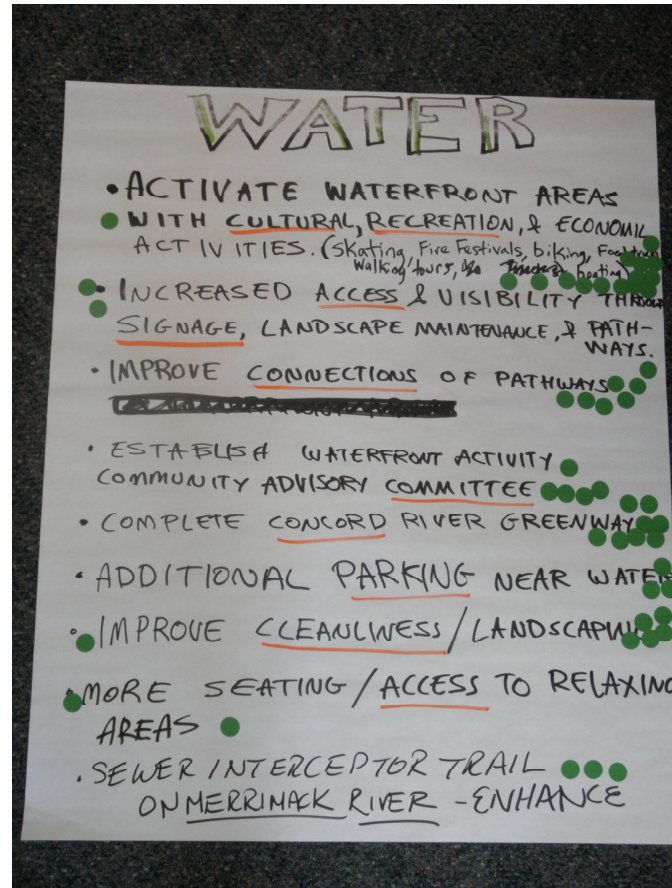
- Plant more street trees
- Encourage the planting of native species
- Encourage rain barrel usage
- Incorporate rain gardens into landscaping



- Explore the use of windmills to generate energy
- Place more recycling bins downtown and in the neighborhoods
- Increase use of permeable pavement to address flooding concerns
- Provide public with reports on air emissions and water quality
- Improve odor of the Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Create incentives for businesses to become “green”
- Increase education of sustainability in schools and for the public
- Promote Lowell as a sustainable and green community (Successes acknowledged: Sustainability Week, Riverfest, Earth Day)

Waterways

- Clean up the rivers and canals
- Improve maintenance of canal and river walkways
- Create public internet access
- Complete the Concord River Greenway
- Provide incentives to waterfront developers
- Establish more cafes and public meeting spaces along the water
- Display public art
- Organize festivals, walking tours and other activities that bring people to or along the water (bike and water fire)
- Promote kayaking, swimming, skating and other similar uses
- Partner with National Park to allow supervised kayaking on canals and offer free canal tours on certain days
- Establish a Waterway Steering Committee for the city
- Build a pedestrian bridge across the Merrimack Canal by Lowell High School to improve pedestrian access to downtown
- Improve accessibility of canal walkways for disabled residents
- Improve parking options by canal walkways and rivers
- Use waterways as a means of alternative transportation
- Implement waterfront objectives of the *Downtown Evolution Plan*
- Improve visibility by increasing signage
- Expand parking options along the water



Parks & Recreation



- Incorporate lighting for safety and night use
 - Establish a community gardening program
 - Better utilize pocket parks
 - Improve maintenance
-
- Make the JFK Civic Center Plaza into a park and include a fountain
 - Encourage diverse populations to use facilities by adapting to different cultural needs and abilities
 - Create opportunities for barbecuing and picnics in public spaces
 - Keep pools open in the Summer
 - Use facilities creatively during Winter months
 - Send out newsletters to promote programs
 - Promote parks as cultural and tourist attractions
 - Activate the area behind the Tsongas Center
 - Construct additional skate parks throughout the city
 - Better connect trails and green spaces to one another
 - Provide better access to information about open spaces
 - Incorporate interactive elements such as fountains and spray parks
 - Focus attention on the State Forest through events and promotion
 - Improve and expand downtown green spaces such as Shattuck Street Park
 - Explore fundraising options such as memorial benches and engravers instead of dedications

Online Participatory Tool: Community PlanIt



Overview

Over the past decade, our society has become increasingly dependent on new media and other emerging technologies as primary means of communication. To best harness the social capital these technologies have generated, and encourage more transparent, democratic processes, planners and software developers alike have sought to create systems that capture data in new and innovative ways. Looking to accommodate peoples' busy schedules and to create

discussion forums that are usable for those on the move, in recent years, a variety of online participatory planning tools have been developed to help meet current planning needs.

Seeking to engage as diverse a population as possible through the planning process, the Department of Planning and Development collaborated with the developers of a successful online tool used in greater Boston. *Participatory Chinatown*, a web-based video game launched in Boston's Chinatown neighborhood in 2010, had been a particularly effective method for reaching younger generations, non-English speaking residents, and others who may not have had the time or inclination to attend a public meeting. Through its partnership with Emerson, Lowell achieved similar results.

While replicating such an elaborate video game for Lowell’s purposes was not feasible, after initial discussions with game developers from Emerson College, the City of Lowell learned of a new open source software program that was being developed: Community PlanIt. This fun and interactive tool could be adapted by any municipality for its own unique needs at no cost to that entity. It proved to be a good match with Lowell’s planning process.

Figure 1: Sample Community PlanIt Platform

The screenshot shows the Community PlanIt platform interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the logo, 'Admin', 'Create Challenge', 'Logout', and 'All Issues | Boston'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with 'Dashboard', 'Missions', 'Issues', and 'Challenges'. A banner for 'Open Space' is visible. On the left, a 'Progress' section shows '100/100 Points' and a '2' in a blue circle. The main content area displays 'You currently have 2 coins to spend on issues!'. Below this is a table with columns 'Issue', 'Total coins', and 'Your coins'. The table lists six issues: Open Spaces (4 comments), Safety (0 comments), Housing Choice (1 comments), Neighborhood Mobility (0 comments), Local Businesses (0 comments), and Identity (0 comments). Each row has a 'Spend' button and a small icon.

Issue	Total coins	Your coins
Open Spaces (4 comments)	6	0
Safety (0 comments)	0	0
Housing Choice (1 comments)	0	0
Neighborhood Mobility (0 comments)	1	0
Local Businesses (0 comments)	0	0
Identity (0 comments)	0	0

During the Spring of 2011, DPD worked in collaboration with Emerson College and several local youth organizations to prepare Lowell-specific content and questions for the tool. Staff from DPD held focus groups with young people from the United Teen Equality Center, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell, and the Lowell Community Health Center’s Teen Coalition, to solicit input for the game. During the official launch, these three organizations, in addition to Girls Inc., Light of Cambodian Children, the Lowell Telecommunications Corporation, and The Revolving Museum opened their computer labs for public use of the game, so as to accommodate those without access to a computer or the internet. In total, 61 youth participated in these organizational planning sessions.

In June of 2011, Lowell was the first city to officially utilize Community PlanIt during a public planning process. Participants signed up by email, as they would when joining a social media site like Facebook. From there, they were directed to complete activities related to sustainability planning in the city. The more participants “shared their voice” by completing these online activities, the more coins they earned to spend on issues that mattered to them most, such as *Housing, Arts & Culture*, and *Open Space*. In total, 175 people signed up to participate over the course of the 11-day launch. Participants spent 441 coins on issues of personal importance and shared over 1,000 comments and ideas with the city and one another.

“I’ve never
thought this
much about
cities and
how they
work.”

- Participant from UTEC

In a survey conducted by Emerson College following the launch, 90% of users reported that they found Community PlanIt to be a fun way to engage in local politics and 95% reported that they would participate again should the tool be utilized as part of a future planning process.

While registered participants had the opportunity to provide basic demographic information through the interface, they were not required to do so. For this reason, DPD has access only to the demographic data that was made available by a small subset of users who completed certain portions of their online profiles. The demographic breakdown for ethnicity is listed below, and demonstrates that the sample is largely representative of the overall population of the city.

Base=49	% Per 2010 Census	% Per Community PlanIt
Caucasian	53	47
African & African American	6	12
Latino	17	11
Asian	20	24
Other	4	6

Similarly, neighborhoods were well represented by the sample of participants who identified where they lived.

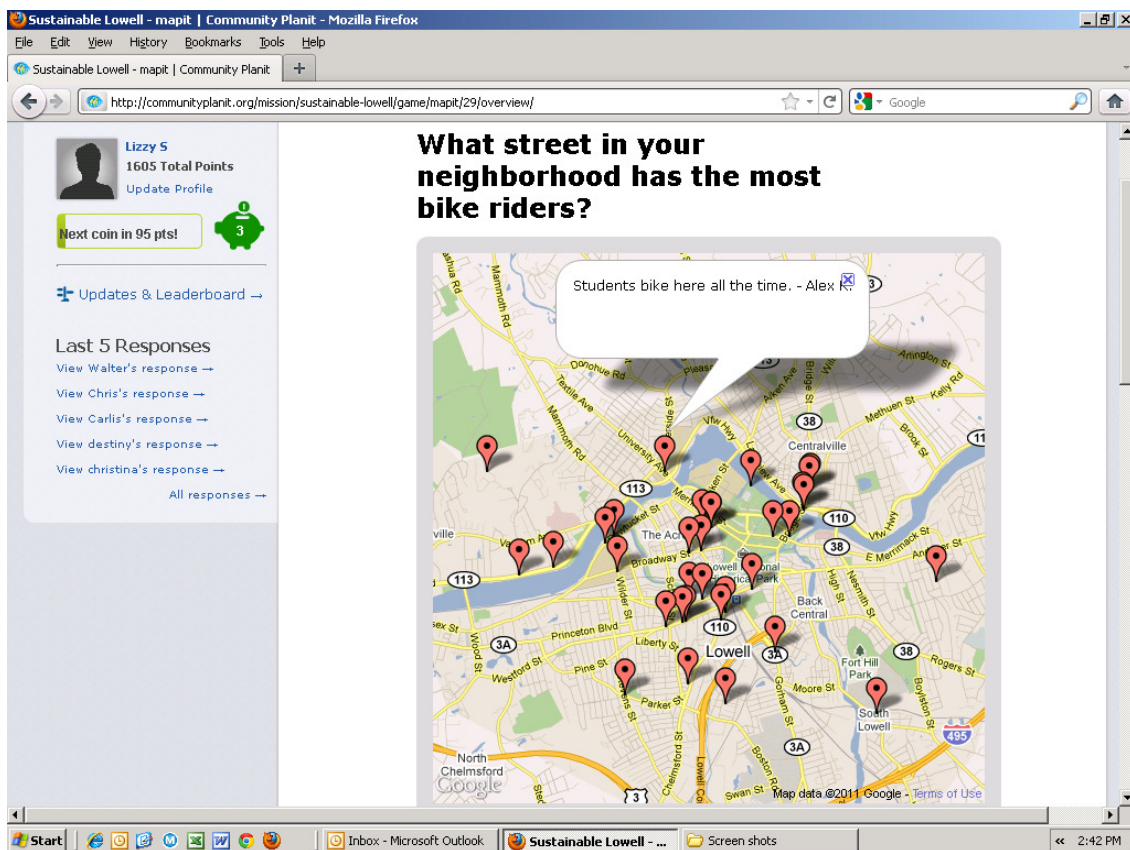
Base=99	% Per 2010 Census	% Per Community PlanIt
Acre	11	9
Back Central	5	4
Belvidere	10	9
Centralville & Christian Hill	15	11
Downtown	5	10
Highlands	28	37
Pawtucketville	14	11
South Lowell & Sacred Heart	12	9

Major Themes

The theme of sustainability permeated all activities presented in the Lowell launch of Community PlanIt, which debuted during Lowell's first Sustainability Week in mid-June. The tool allowed participants to reflect on topics such as community gardening, car and bicycle sharing, local entrepreneurship and innovation, energy efficiency, and better activation of waterfront areas, among others.

Activities fell into one of three categories: (1) ThinkFast multiple choice questions, (2) MapIt games, and (3) Challenges. All activities provided participants with a forum to further discuss the issue at hand. ThinkFast questions displayed pie charts of all player responses. MapIt games enabled players to select a point on a map and comment on why they had selected that location in response to a particular question. Challenges encouraged participants to build community off-line and venture into their own neighborhoods by completing activities such as cooking with locally grown produce or taking pictures of themselves in front of places where they'd like to see a mural painted.

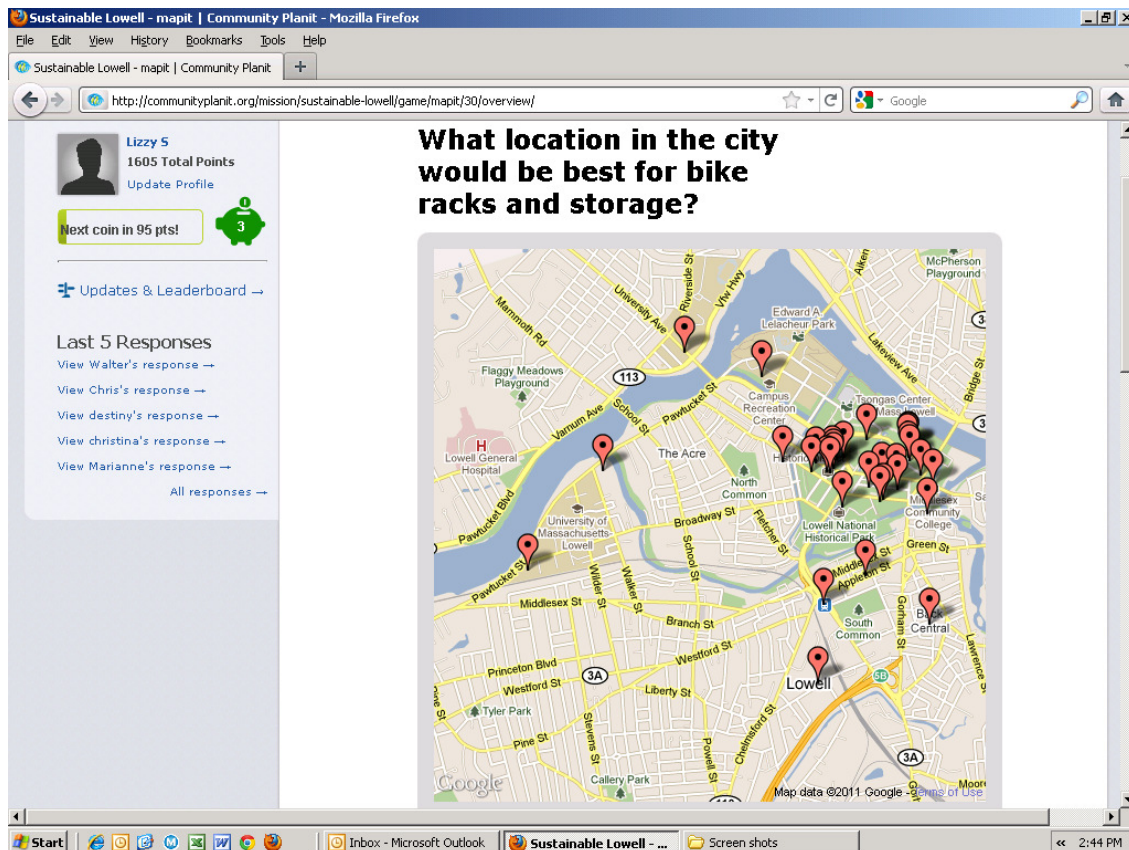
While this report does not address responses to each individual question posed, it provides a comprehensive summary of the issues raised throughout the Lowell launch. For a complete listing of activities incorporated into Lowell's Community PlanIt game, please see Appendix C.

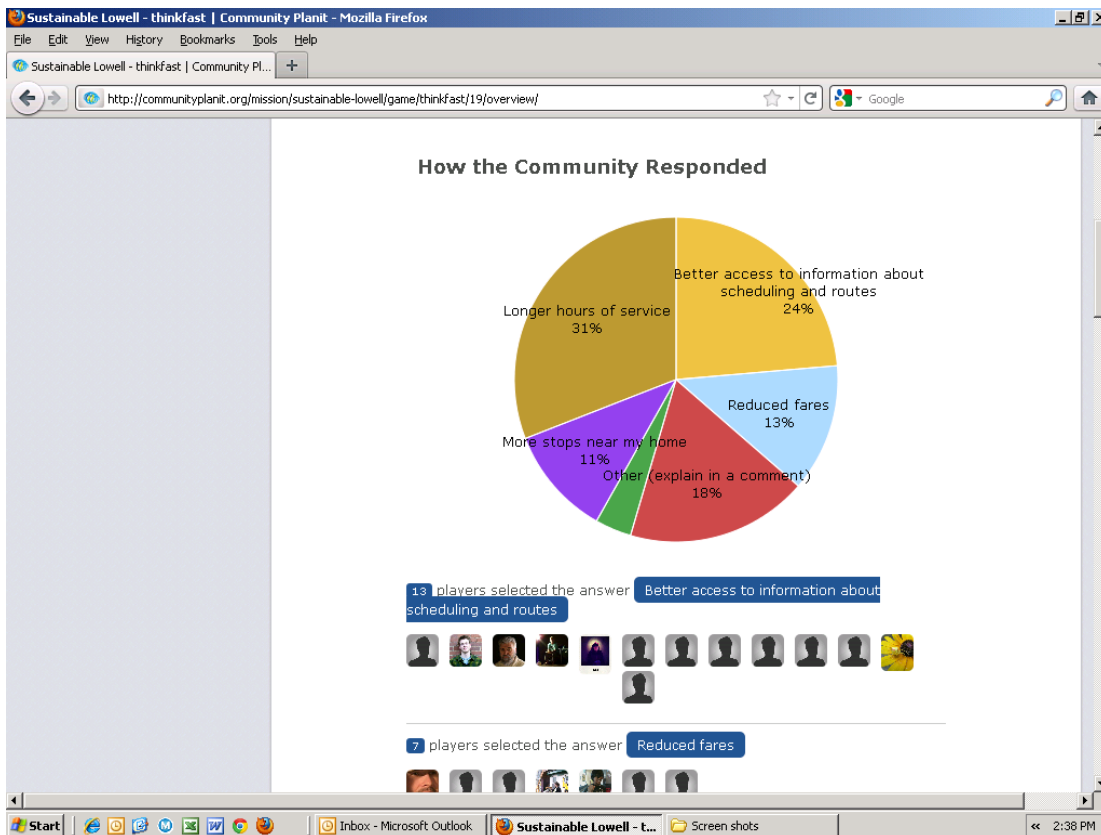
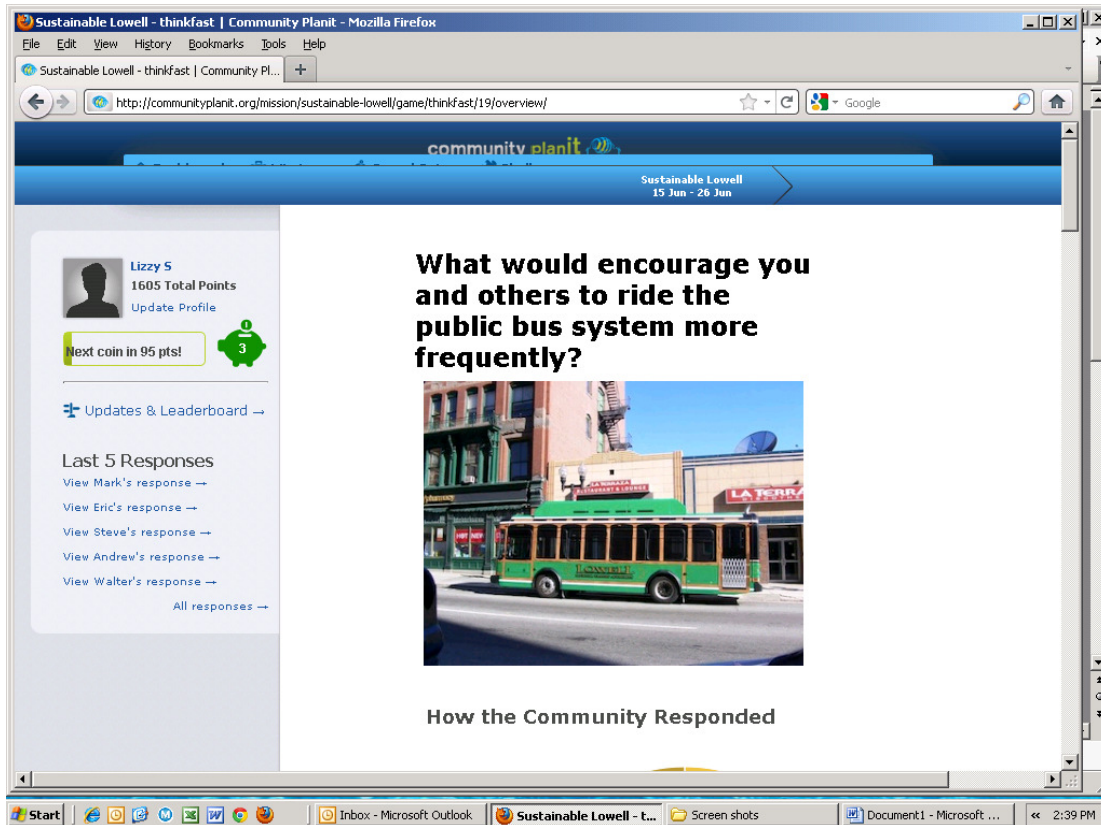


TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- Nearly 50% participants would utilize a bike-sharing program
- 44% indicated they would take advantage of a car-sharing opportunity in Lowell if it were made available
- Most felt access to the Gallagher Terminal was the biggest barrier to pedestrian accessibility
- 31% of participants reported that they would be more willing to use the public bus system if the hours of service were extended and 24% would like to see better access to information about schedules and routes
- Over 25% of participants cross one of the city's bridges at least 3 times per day

The majority of participants saw the greatest need for bike racks and other cyclist amenities in Lowell's Downtown. Alternative locations prioritized the University's North, East and South campuses. These recommendations align closely with the City and University's shared goal of increasing bike and pedestrian activity throughout the downtown and all campuses.





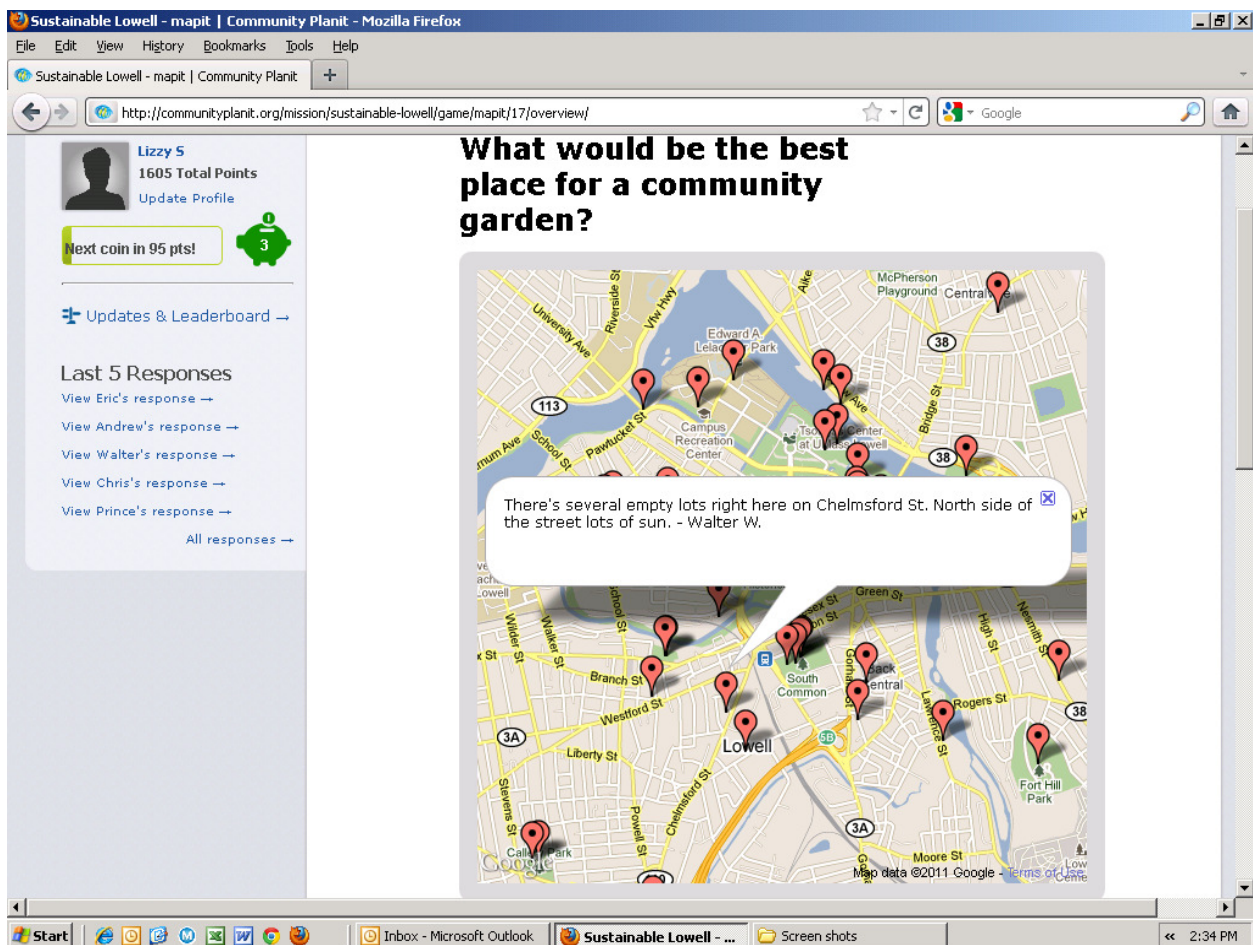
PUBLIC PARKS & RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Athletic Facilities Choices:

36% Basketball courts
15% Swimming Pools
22% Pedestrian/Biking Paths
9% Tennis
7% Soccer
7% Volleyball

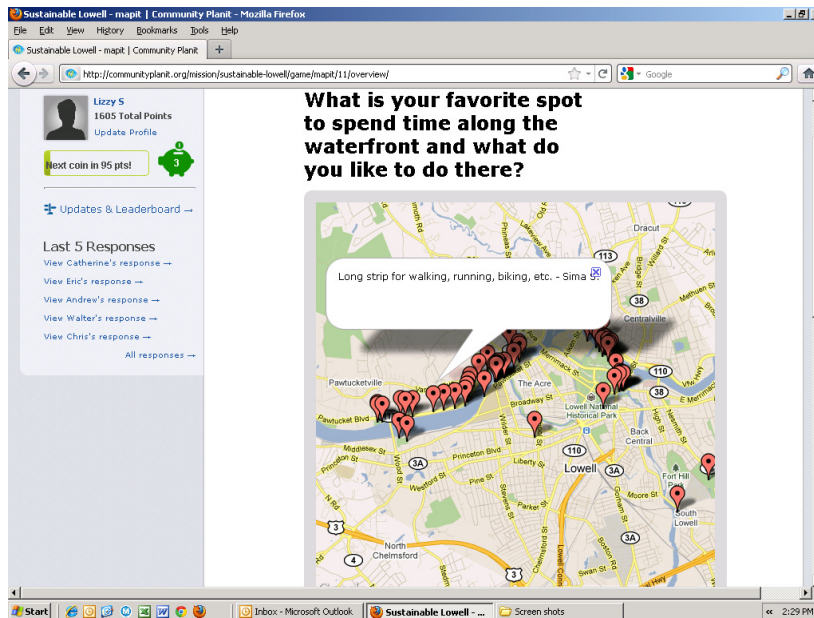
Public Park Needs:

22% Gardens
19% Jogging and Walking Paths
14% Benches, Picnic Tables & Grills
9% Spray Parks/Playgrounds
8% Athletic Fields
3% Athletic Equipment

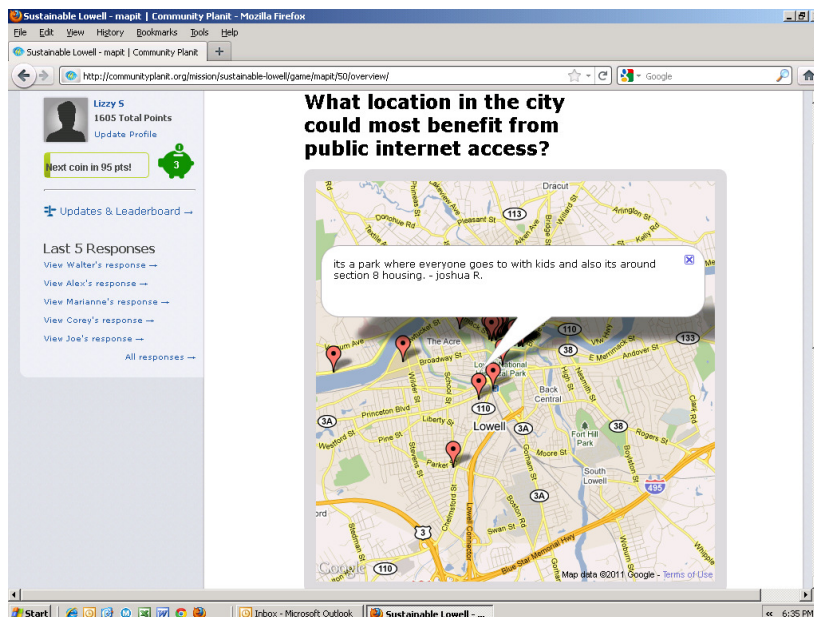


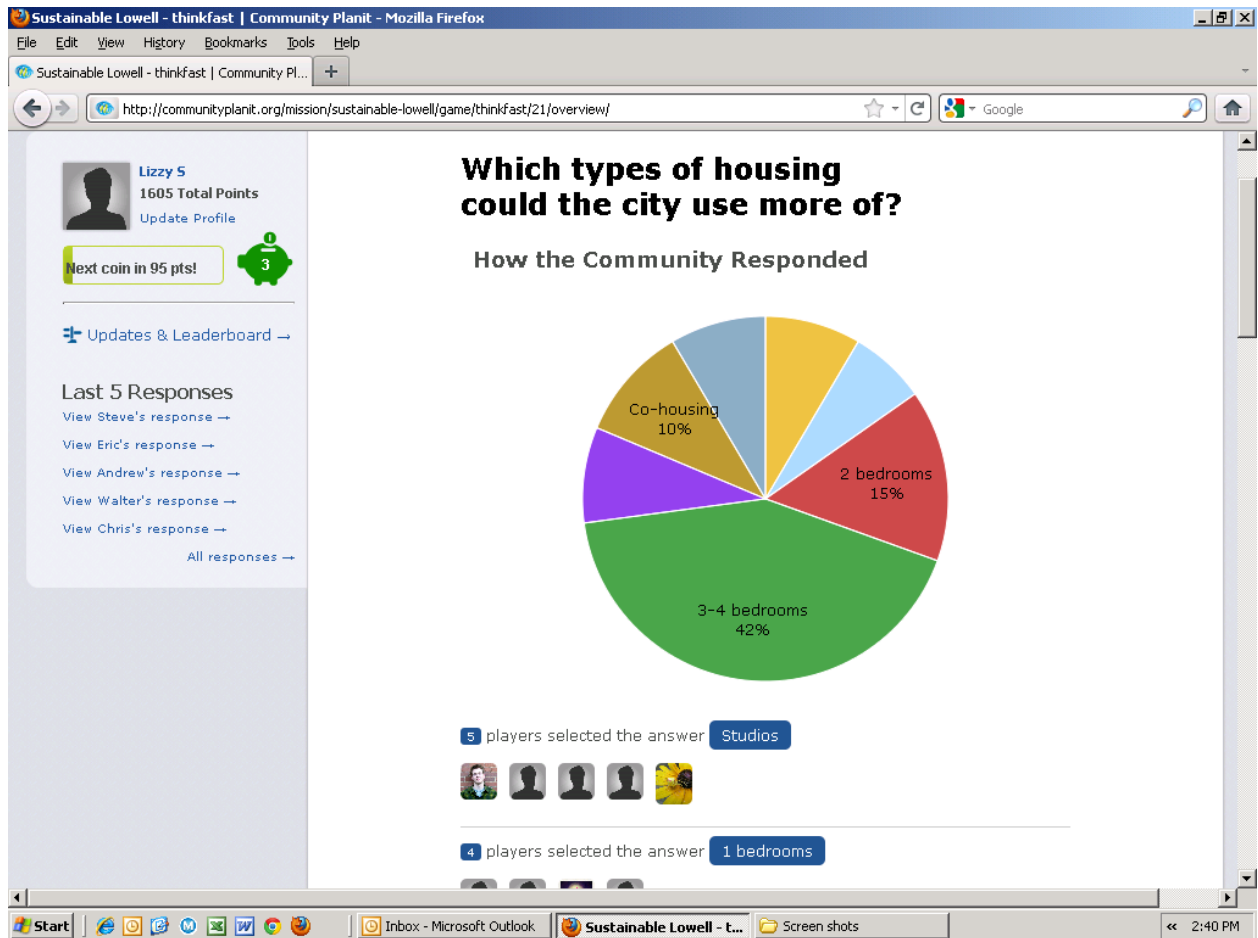
Participants wished to see community gardens in existing open spaces, such as South Common and Clemente Park, as well as in vacant and underutilized spaces in and around downtown.

Existing pathways along the waterfront, such as Pawtucket Boulevard, were extremely popular locations and places where many participants spent their time. Many advocated for better connectivity of these trails and walkways.



Participants also made note of public places where they felt public internet access would be useful, including various locations downtown, along the Boulevard, and in public parks within the Lower Highlands and the Acre.



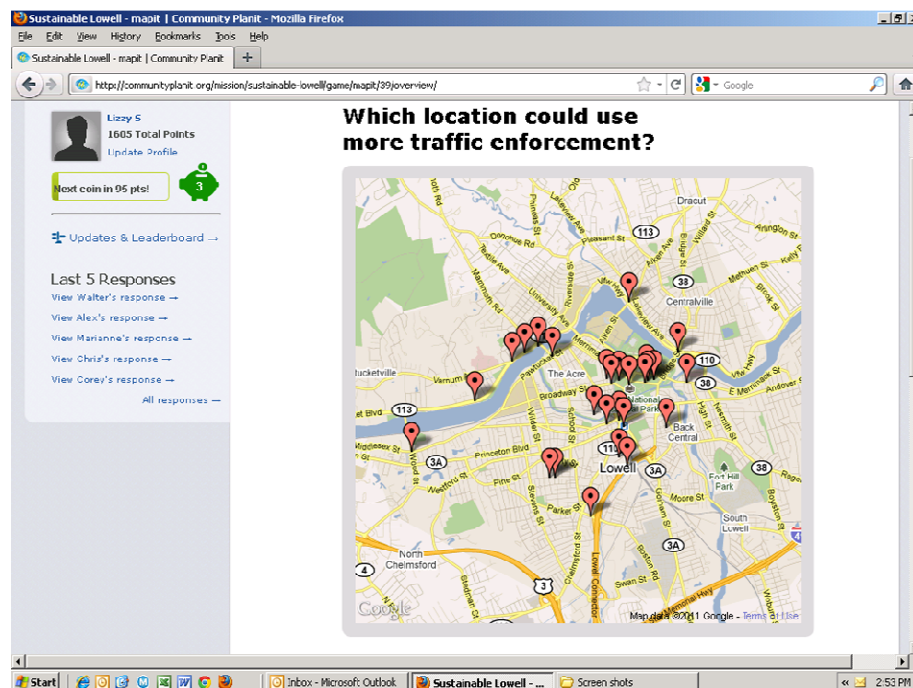
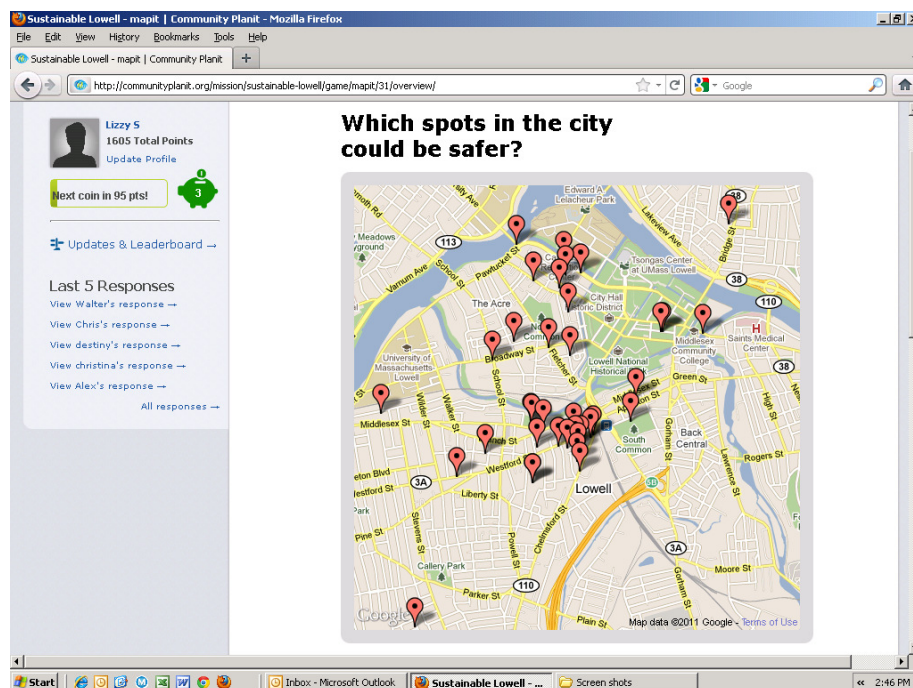


HOUSING PREFERENCE

- 42% more 3-4 bedroom housing
- 15% more 2 bedroom housing
- 10% more co-housing
- 8% more live/work spaces
- 8% more studios
- 7% more 1 bedrooms

PUBLIC SAFETY

Numerous locations in the Acre and Lower Highlands were identified as needing public safety enhancements. Results indicate that various locations along the VFW Highway and around downtown could use additional traffic enforcement.



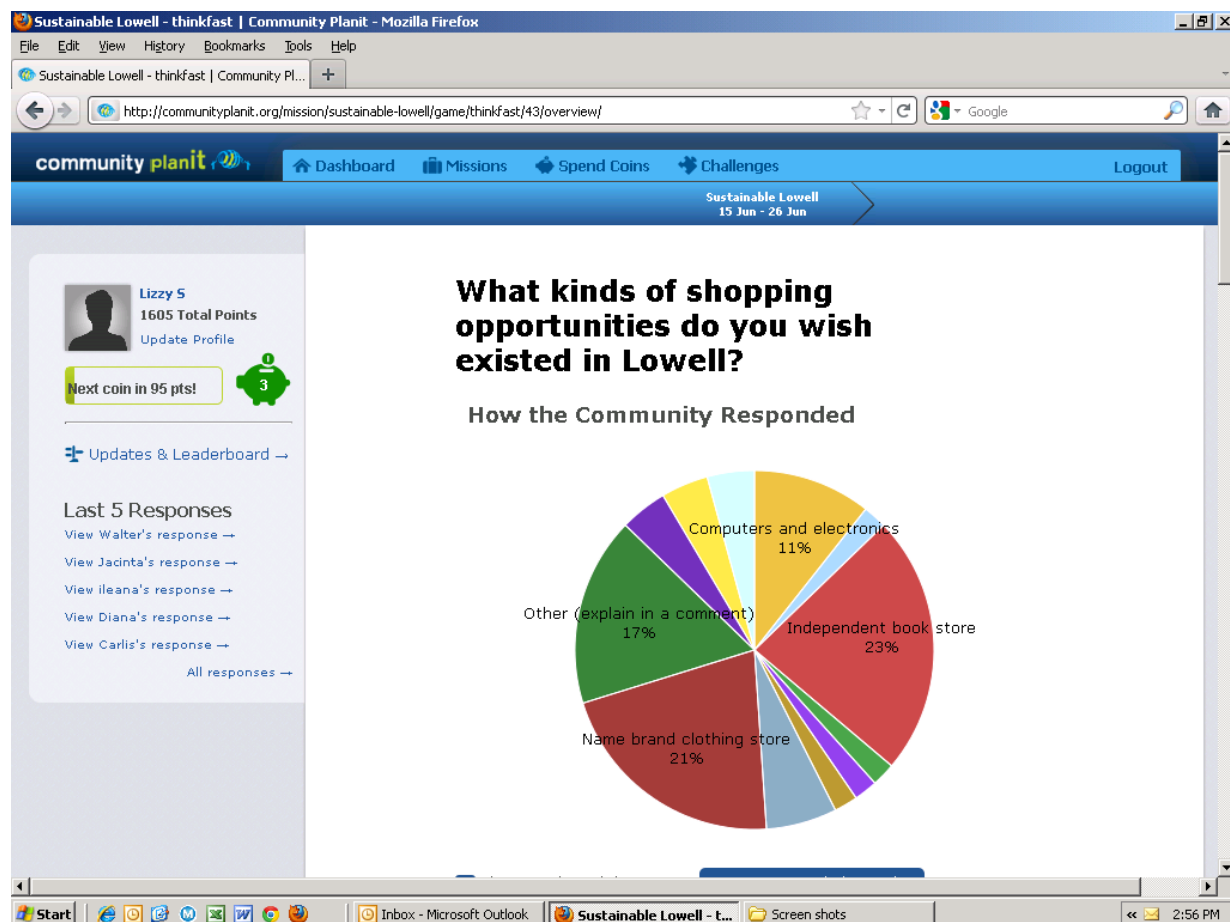
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Entertainment Opportunities

- Downtown Movie Theatre
- More Live Music Venues
- Street Festivals
- Jet Ski & Paddleboat Rental
- Medium-sized Performance Venue
- Comedy & Black Box Theatre

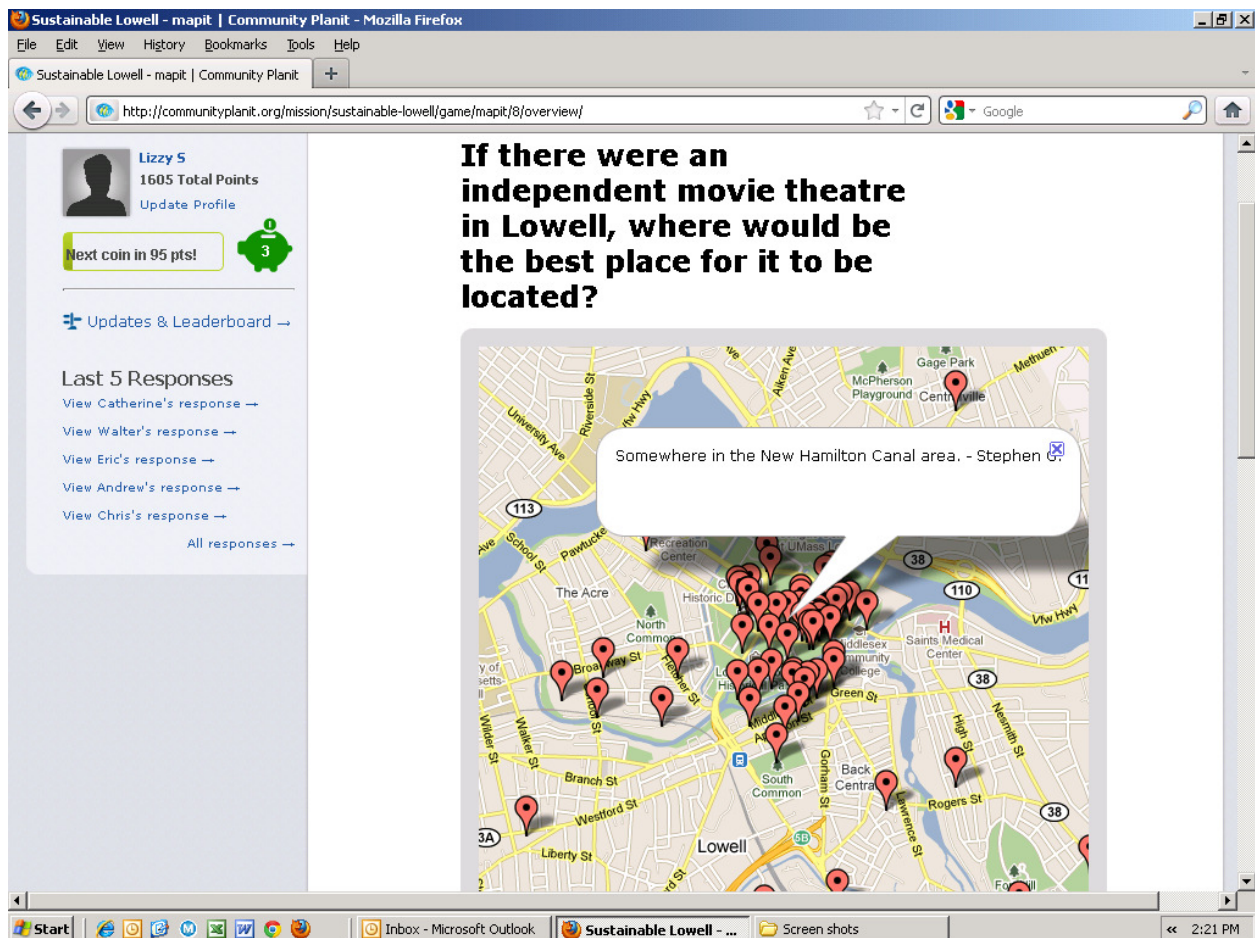
Shopping Preferences

- 23% Independent Bookstore
- 21% Name Brand Clothing
- 17% Other (Record Store, Health Food Store, Bicycle Shop, Food Trucks, Longer hours of service, Greater Variety of Stores)
- 11% Computers & Electronics



ARTS, CULTURE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Create Incubators for Innovation
- Establish an Artist-in-Residency Program
- Cultivate Arts & Cultural Programming in the Neighborhoods
- Continue to Make Affordable Live/Work Space Available
- Develop Community Arts Education, Programming, & Cooperatively Used Spaces
- Expand Opportunities to Young and Contemporary Artists
- Explore Use of Kickstarter.com as Potential Funding Source





COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION & ENGAGEMENT

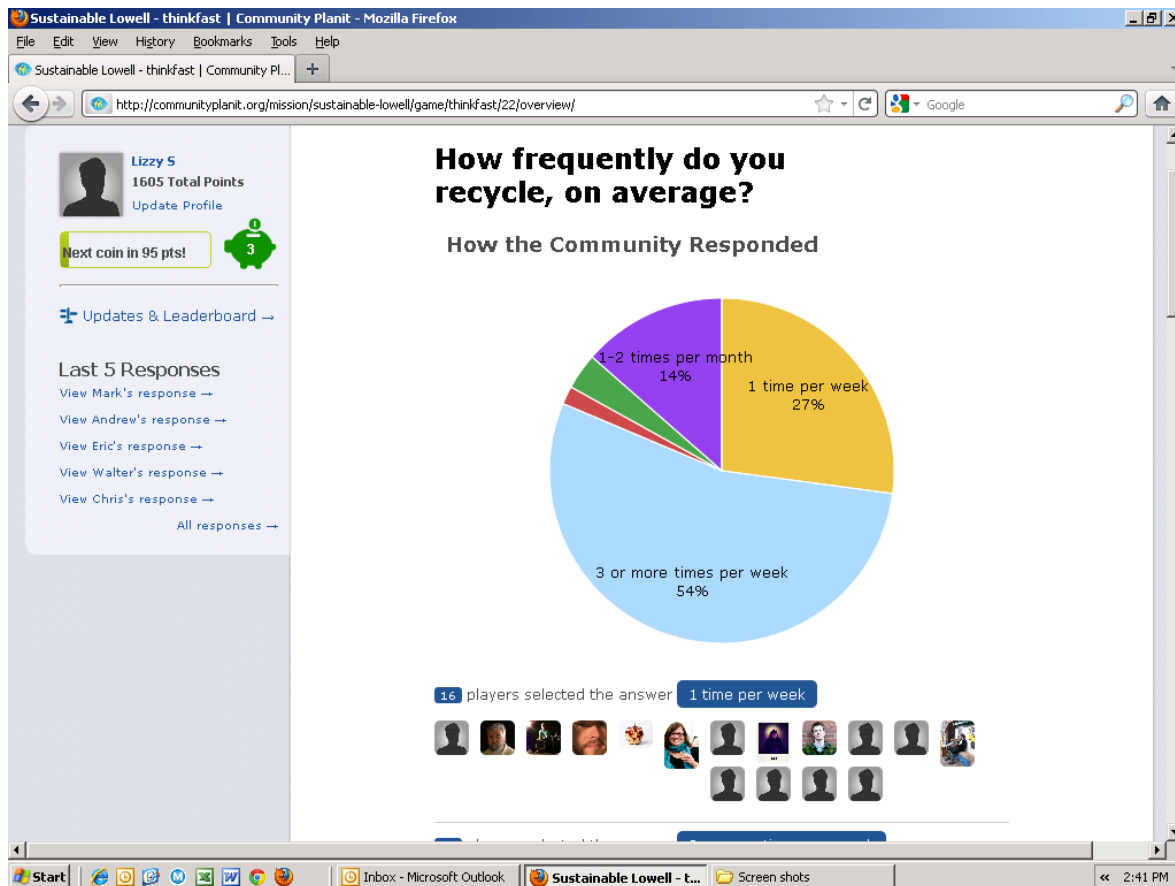
- Encourage City Councilors to Visit the Neighborhoods
- Increase Information Access Using Newer Technologies
 - Host Public Workshops on Civic Engagement
 - Provide Translation at Public Meetings

44% of Participants use Social Media to Access Information

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Cultivate Opportunities for Vertical Growing & Community Gardens
- Enhance Outreach & Promotion of Environmental Initiatives
- Further Incentivize Energy Efficiency Improvements & Recycling
- Expand Recycling Program to Residents in Multi-unit Buildings

**81% of
Participants
Recycle
At Least Once
Per Week**



Appendix

Appendix A: 2011 Survey Instrument

Lowell Telephone Survey

Hello, I'm _____, and am calling for the City of Lowell's Department of Planning and Development. Today, we're doing a survey on what it's like to live in Lowell and we'd like to include your views. The results of this survey will help the city of Lowell update its current Master Plan and influence policy decisions.

May I please speak with the male or female head of household?

[If transferred to another adult, repeat introduction. If continuing with the same individual who answered the telephone, continue with below.]

This survey will take about 15 minutes of your time. This is not a sales call and your individual opinions will remain strictly confidential.

IF NOT AVAILABLE OR NOT A GOOD TIME, ASK FOR A CONVENIENT TIME TO CALL BACK.

First _____ (Date/Time)

Second _____ (Date/Time)

Third _____ (Date/Time)

1. In what language would you prefer to conduct the interview?

☐ English

☐ Spanish **[CONTINUE INTERVIEW IN SPANISH]**

☐ Portuguese **[CONTINUE INTERVIEW IN PORTUGUESE]**

☐ Khmer **[PHONECTICALLY WRITTEN IN KHMER: SOMEONE WILL CALL YOU BACK TO CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW; IS THERE A GOOD TIME FOR A CALLBACK _____ (Date/Time)]**

2. Do you live in Lowell?

☐ No **[THANK RESPONDENT AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW]**

☐ Yes **[CONTINUE]**

3. Here's a list of items that some people may consider important when judging a community to live in. As I read each one, tell me how important that item is to you. Please use a scale of one to ten, where a '10' means **Very Important** and a '1' means **Not at all Important**.

	Not at all Important 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very Important 10
Police, Fire and Public Safety										
Public Health Programs										
Roads, Public Transportation and Parking										
Ethnic and Racial Equality										
City Services										
Housing										
Recreational Opportunities										
Job Opportunities										
Schools										
Stores and Businesses										
Cost of Living										
Neighborhood Character										
Environmental Quality										
Community Involvement										

4. Now, let's talk about how well the city of Lowell does addressing some specific issues. I am going to read a list of items and this time please tell me how well you feel Lowell is doing on each item. Rate Lowell on a scale of 1 to 10, where a '10' means **Lowell is doing an excellent job** and a '1' means **Lowell is doing a terrible job**. [ROTATE ITEMS]

Service	Terrible 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Excellent 10
Police, Fire and Public Safety										
A place I feel safe										
Public Health Programs										
Public health programs that meet my basic needs										
Roads, Public Transportation and Parking										
Roads and sidewalks that are maintained										
Enough parking										
Convenient pathways for pedestrians and bicycles										
Traffic that moves freely through the city										
Streets and walkways designed to keep accidents from happening										
Public transportation										
Ethnic and Racial Equality										
Everyone is treated fairly by city officials										
City Services										

My neighborhood gets its fair share of city programs and services												
I am well informed about city services and activities												
Information about city services is communicated using modern technologies												
Snow removal												
Trash removal												
Recycling program												
Housing												
Not feeling crowded in my neighborhood												
Residential housing is well maintained												
Good selection of housing that I can afford												
Recreational Opportunities												
Parks and recreational areas that meet my needs												
Plenty of cultural activities												
Plenty of public events and festivals												
Lots of positive activities for children and teens												
Downtown restaurants and cafes open later in the evening												
Job Opportunities												
Lots of job opportunities for me in the city												
Access to training for professional growth												
Schools												
Good public schools												
Stores and Businesses												
A good variety of stores downtown												
Stores in my neighborhood that meet my basic shopping needs												
Cost of living												
Reasonable property taxes												
Neighborhood Character												
A clean and attractive city												
A city that preserves its historic places												

Buildings that are well maintained											
Environmental Quality											
Drinking water quality											
Air quality											
Incentives that encourage energy efficiency											
Flood management											
Community Involvement											
Community pride											
Neighbors that trust each other											
Neighbors that get along well											
Plenty of opportunities to have my voice heard											

5. Using a ten-point scale where '10' means **Truly wonderful place to live** and '1' means **Absolutely awful place to live**, please tell me, overall, how you would rate Lowell as a place to live.

	Absolutely awful place to live 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Truly wonderful place to live 10
Overall evaluation of Lowell as a place to live										

A city often needs to choose how it spends its resources on issues for its citizens. We would like to know how you think Lowell should choose between some issues. **[Read first pair and then ask – Which do you think Lowell should focus on?]**

6.
() Increasing city services like public safety and trash removal but increasing taxes to do so.

OR

() Maintaining current city services like public safety and trash removal the way they are, while controlling tax increases.

7.

() Making it easier for cars to move through the city.

OR

() Making it easier and safer for bicycles and pedestrians to share streets and protect quiet neighborhoods.

8.

() Increasing housing options by building more housing, but with more people living in each neighborhood.

OR

() Encourage more open space in neighborhoods, but reduce housing options.

9.

() Make Lowell look more attractive by improving the downtown and city gateways.

OR

() Make your neighborhood more attractive by improving the residential areas.

10.

() Add more swing sets and play equipment for younger children in parks.

OR

() Add more athletic fields in parks such as basketball and volleyball courts.

OR

() Add more open space for trails, natural areas, and conservation land.

11.
☐ Protect historic design and neighborhood character by regulating design and construction.

OR

☐ Enhance private property rights by allowing an individual property owner to do what they want with their property.

12.
☐ Encourage job creation by bringing industrial and commercial development to more areas of the city.

OR

☐ Protect residential areas by restricting industrial and commercial development in most areas of the city.

13.
☐ Help small, locally owned businesses to grow in Lowell.

OR

☐ Attract familiar national companies to the city.

14.
☐ Pursue policies that protect the environment and reduce waste and pollution for long term benefit even when there is an added short-term cost.

OR

☐ Prioritize policies based on short-term cost even if they are not good for the environment or may not work in the long term.

15. If Lowell could do three things to improve the community as a place for you to live, what would those things be?

[TEXT BOX]

The following questions are for classification purposes only.

16. In what year did you move to Lowell?

☐ [TEXT BOX] OR ☐ I've lived here all my life

17. Which Lowell neighborhood do you live in? **[DO NOT READ LIST, SELECT ONE. If respondent does not know which neighborhood, get their street address or the names of the 2 streets that intersect closest to their home.]**

Neighborhood	
Acre	
Back Central	
Belvidere	
Centralville	
Highlands	
Lower Belvidere	
Lower Highlands	
Pawtucketville	
Sacred Heart	
South Lowell	
Don't know	
Other (please specify)	
OR: Street address	

18. How do you typically find out about city events and services? Please select the answer that best fits your experience.

- ☐ City website
- ☐ Lowell Sun
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

19. What type of home do you live in? **[READ LIST]**

- ☐ Single Family Home
- ☐ Apartment -----⌚ Ask "How many units are in your building?" [TEXT BOX]
- ☐ Other -----⌚ Ask "How many units are in your building?" [TEXT BOX]

20. Do you own or rent your home?

- ☐ Own
- ☐ Rent

21. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

[TEXT BOX] – if "1" Go to Q24

22. How many children under the age of 18 currently live in your household?

[TEXT BOX]

or

☐ None – **Go to Q24**

23. Are any of those children enrolled in Lowell Public Schools?

☐ Yes

☐ No

24. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnic background? **[READ LIST]**

☐ African

☐ Black/African American

☐ Brazilian

☐ Portuguese

☐ Latino

☐ Cambodian

☐ White or Caucasian

☐ Other Asian

☐ Other (Please Specify) [Text Box]

25. What is your age? _____

26. What is the occupation of the chief wage earner or head of your household?

☐ Retired (**Please check previous occupation and Go to Q28**)

☐ Professional/technical

☐ Managerial/proprietor

☐ Clerical/sales

☐ Skilled craftsperson

☐ Factory worker

☐ Service worker

☐ Self-employed

☐ Unemployed -- **Go to Q28**

☐ Student – **Go to Q28**

☐ Homemaker – **Go to Q28**

☐ Other _____ (**Please specify**)

27. What is the last year of formal schooling you personally completed? **[READ LIST]**

- ☐ Some High School or Less
- ☐ High School Graduate
- ☐ Vocational/Technical School (2 year)
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ College Graduate (4 year)
- ☐ Some Post Graduate work
- ☐ Post Graduate Degree

28. Please stop me when I read the category that includes your total annual household income for 2001. **[READ LIST]**

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 or more

29. Gender **[INTERVIEWER RECORD]**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Thank you for your time. Your opinions are greatly appreciated.

Appendix B: Visioning Session Topics and Questions

Meeting Topic	Sub-topics	Questions
Housing & Public Services July 14	Green Building/ Healthy Homes	What makes a “healthy home”? What would improve the “health” of your home? How can we encourage green building practices in the city? What incentives could be provided to encourage energy efficient homes and buildings? What are the current barriers to green building and similar technologies? What barriers do people face to making energy efficiency improvements in their own homes (rented or owned)?
	Housing Availability/ Affordability	How would you describe the availability of housing in the city? What challenges have you faced in finding housing that meets your needs? What types of housing are still needed? How affordable is Lowell as a place to live? How important is affordable housing? Are there suitable housing options near public transit and jobs? If not, what areas could be improved to link transit, housing and jobs?
	Housing Quality	How would you describe the quality of rental housing that is currently available in the city/your neighborhood? How would you describe the quality of homes available for purchase? What could be done to improve the quality of housing? What challenges do you face as a homeowner or renter in (affording to maintain the quality of your home, etc)? How important is housing quality to you?
	Public Services	How would you describe the existing public services? What services do you most rely on? What could be done to improve the public services currently provided in the city? What additional services do you need that you’re not receiving?

Meeting Topic	Sub-topics	Questions
Transportation & Mobility July 19	Mobility & Traffic Calming	How would you describe what it's like to move around the city by car, bike, or on foot? What factors make it a challenge to get around your neighborhood or the city as a whole? What locations in the city have the most traffic flow and safety issues, and at which times of day? What's more important: bike/pedestrian safety or moving quickly in a car? How could we reduce the number of daily bridge crossings? How would you rate the public infrastructure (roads, sidewalks), and what areas could be improved?
	Multi-modal Transportation	What factors deter you from walking or biking around the city? What would encourage you to walk or bike more? How important is it to you to have access to alternative means of transportation? How would you describe the city's public transportation system? How could it be improved? Trolley system potential? Car-sharing? Bike-sharing?
	Regional Connections and Gateways	What do you see as the primary gateways to the city and how could they be improved? How could connections to other cities and towns in the region be improved? If you currently drive to work, what factors would encourage you to take a bus, carpool, or ride a bike?
	Parking	Describe what it's like to find parking in the downtown? Your neighborhood? What works and what could be improved? How do you use on and off street parking? Are there particular locations where parking is a major concern? How can we create parking areas that are more environmentally sustainable, and how important is that to you?

Meeting Topic	Sub-topics	Questions
Economic Development, Workforce Investment & Institutional Partnerships July 25	Innovation & Entrepreneurship	What kinds of job opportunities are needed in the city and region? What types of companies should we look to attract? How can we increase start-up activities that lead to home-grown job growth/support emerging entrepreneurs?
	Area Business Development (Neighborhoods, Regional)	How often do you shop in your neighborhood and where do you go? What types of businesses can you walk to? What types of businesses/shopping opportunities would you like to be able to walk to and where? What are some of the challenges local businesses face and how can their needs be better met? Should we continue to focus on regional retail?
	Downtown Development	What do you like most about the city's downtown? How often do you shop downtown? From your perspective, what would improve the city's downtown? What kinds of shopping opportunities would you like to see downtown? What percentage of shopping do you do in Lowell versus outside? How can we draw more people downtown?
	Education, Workforce Development, & Institutional Partnerships	How could the school systems (elementary/high school/higher Ed) be improved so as to better prepare young people for the next wave of jobs? What skills does the next generation of leaders need to succeed? What kinds of partnerships with public and private entities could be forged or strengthened in the city? What programs could be established with UMass Lowell, MCC, and the local high schools to support a vibrant local and regional economy?

Meeting Topic	Sub-topics	Questions
Community Character, Engagement & Identity July 28	Neighborhood Character	What qualities define your neighborhood (social, environmental, aesthetic, etc)? What do you like most about your neighborhood? What factors make it challenging to maintain a high quality of life in your neighborhood? What improvements would you like to see?
	Civic Engagement, Communication & Technology	How well do you think the city does at communicating with its residents? Engaging a representative sample of community members? How do you find out about events and services in the city? How can we increase civic engagement in the city? How can we involve more diverse groups of people in the decision-making processes of our city? How could information be made more accessible?
	Arts, Cultural & Historic Resources	How would you rate the quantity and quality of arts and cultural resources offered? What types of events and entertainment do you find most valuable to Lowell? How do you feel about the distribution of cultural resources in the city? What types of additional cultural events and opportunities do you wish were offered? In what ways could Lowell better celebrate and honor the various cultures in the city through the arts? What would encourage artists to move to and stay in Lowell? Types of performance venues are needed?
	Community Pride	How long have you lived in Lowell? What factors have lead you to commit to living in the city for the period you have? Are you proud to be a Lowell resident? Why or why not? What qualities make Lowell unique? What would make Lowell the ideal community for you to live in in 10 years?

Meeting Topic	Sub-topics	Questions
Open Space & Natural Resources August 3	Preservation, Conservation & Historical Resources	How would you rate the quality of existing preservation/conservation areas? What are your favorite preservation and conservation areas in Lowell? Are there particular places or resources you would like to see preserved or better cared for? How could conservation areas or passive parks be expanded or improved for future use?
	Water	How would you rate our current waterfront areas and rivers in terms of cleanliness and usability? How do you currently use our waterfronts and rivers, if at all? Where do you spend time on/by the water? How can we better utilize our rivers and waterfronts? How do you envision these spaces in the future?
	Parks & Recreation	How would you describe the quality and quantity of parks and facilities currently available for recreation (baseball fields, etc)? What do you like best and least? How do you currently use these facilities? How can we improve the parks and facilities that are available? What additional facilities are needed?
	Environmental Considerations	What concerns do you have about our natural resources and environment (flooding, air quality, water quality)? How would you rate the drinking water and air quality in Lowell? How can we better protect and promote the natural environment in Lowell? How can we best educate the community about local and global environmental challenges?

Appendix C: Community PlanIt Questions

Mission Title: Sustainable Lowell

Mission Overview:

Lowell seeks to become a more livable and sustainable community for current and future generations by preserving its physical environment, supporting a vibrant economy, and valuing its rich social and cultural resources. We want you to be involved in the process! By playing Community PlanIt, you can share your voice, engage in discussions with fellow residents, and help us develop a long-term vision for the city. The more you engage with Community PlanIt, the more “coins” you will earn to spend on issues that matter to you most. Your input will help inform policy decisions that will improve Lowell for the future.

Think Fast

- 1). Which neighborhood do you live in?
 - a). Acre
 - b). Back Central
 - c). Belvidere
 - d). Centralville
 - e). Christian Hill
 - f). Highlands
 - g). Lower Belvidere
 - h). Lower Highlands
 - i). Middlesex Village
 - j). Pawtucketville
 - k). Riverside
 - l). Sacred Heart
 - m). South Lowell
 - n). I work in Lowell, but do not live in Lowell.
 - o). I go to school in Lowell, but do not live in Lowell.
 - p). Don't know
 - q). Other

2). **Neighborhood Choice** - Which neighborhood would you rather live? Explain why in a comment.



3). **Downtown Business Choice** - What types of activities, businesses or other factors would encourage you to go downtown more often?

4). **Neighborhood Business Districts** - Which type of business district would you rather have in your neighborhood? Explain why in a comment.



5). Which type of street is more inviting? Explain why in a comment.



6). **Businesses Type** - What types of businesses would you like to see more of in your neighborhood?

7). **Commuter Calculator** - How much do you spend each year on your commute to work or school? Use MassRide's Commuter Calculator to find out:
<http://www.commute.com/commuters/calculator>. Join the MassRides NuRides Program (<http://www.nuride.com/nuride/main/main.jsp>) and earn rewards for taking greener trips!

- a). \$500 or less
- b). \$500 - \$2,000
- c). \$2,000 - \$5,000
- d). \$5,000 - \$10,000
- e). More than \$10,000

8). **Athletic Facilities** - Which types of athletic facilities are most important to you?

- a). Basketball courts
- b). Tennis courts
- c). Soccer fields
- d). Volleyball courts
- e). Skate Parks
- f). Swimming pools
- g). Handball courts
- h). Other

9). **Public Park Needs** – Which types of public park amenities are most needed?



- a). Gardens
- b). Athletic fields
- c). Athletic equipment
- d). Jogging and Walking Paths
- e). Picnic tables and benches
- f). Drinking fountains
- g). Spray parks
- h). Playgrounds
- i). Other

10). **Public Bus Improvements** - What would encourage you and others to ride the public bus system more frequently?



- a). Longer hours of service
- b). More stops near my home
- c). Better access to information about scheduling and routes
- d). Reduced fares
- e). Shelters to improve comfort and convenience while waiting
- f). Other

11). **Neighborhood Interaction** – How often do you talk to your neighbors?

- a). Never
- b). Rarely
- c). A few times a month
- d). A few times a week
- e). Every day

12). **Job Opportunities** - What kinds of job opportunities would you like to see more of in the city?

13). **Perceptions of Lowell** - How do you think outsiders perceive Lowell?

14). **Local Entrepreneurs** - What do emerging entrepreneurs need in order to thrive in the city?

15). **Local Artists** - What would encourage more artists to move to and stay in Lowell?

16). **Housing Type** – Which types of housing could the city use more of?

- a). Studios
- b). 1 bedrooms
- c). 2 bedrooms
- b). 3-4 bedrooms
- c). Co-housing
- e). Live/work spaces for artists
- f). Senior housing

17). **Recycling Rate** – How frequently do you recycle, on average?

- a). Never
- b). Less than 5 times per year
- c). 1-2 times per month
- d). 1 time per week
- e). 3 or more times per week

18). **Recycling Incentives**– What would encourage more people to recycle?



19). **Information Access**– How do you usually find out about events, activities and other opportunities in the city?

- a). Lowell Sun
- b). Local blogs
- c). City of Lowell website
- d). Facebook, Twitter or other social media
- e). Radio
- f). Television
- g). Flyers or posters around town
- h). Word of mouth
- i). Other

20). **Community Participation** – What would make more residents feel that they had a voice in local government?

21). **Waterway Activity** – The Project for Public Spaces lists 10 Qualities of a Great Waterfront: http://www.pps.org/articles/10_qualities_of_a_great_waterfront/.

How can we better utilize our own waterways (rivers and canals) and the land along them?

22). **Lifelong Resident Identity** - If you have lived in Lowell all of your life, what is something that you feel newer city residents don't always understand or appreciate?

23). **New Resident Identity** - If you are not from Lowell originally, why did you or your family decide to move here, what factors have led you to stay, and what challenges have you faced?

24). **Walking and Biking** - What would encourage you to walk or bike more often?



25). **Car-Sharing** - If Lowell had a car-sharing program (such as zipcar), would you use it? Why or why not? Explain in a comment.



a). Yes, ____

b). No, ____

26). **Bike Sharing** - If the city had a bike-sharing program, would you use it? Why or why not? Explain in a comment.



- a). Yes, _____
- b). No, _____

27). **Environmental Protection** – UMass Lowell students dramatized the cold facts of climate change in a course this past Spring. Watch one of their short films here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mqaatxz_zHI.

For more information, please visit UMass Lowell's Climate Change Initiative website:

<http://www.uml.edu/centers/climate-change/>.

What immediate steps can we take to improve our local environment?

28). **Shopping** - What kinds of shopping opportunities do you wish existed in Lowell?
'Other' should provide users with a way to write a response.

- a). Name brand clothing store
- b). Independent boutique
- c). Record store
- d). Computers and electronics
- e). Sporting good
- f). Independent book store
- g). Health food store
- h). Furniture store
- i). Thrift store
- j). Shoe store
- k). Home furnishings store
- l). Other

29). **City Hall Perceptions** – How comfortable do you feel interacting with the city administration and why?

- a). Not at all comfortable...
- b). Somewhat comfortable...
- c). Very comfortable...

30). **Performance Venues** – What types of performance venues are needed in Lowell? Please explain in a comment.

31). **Bridge Crossings** - How many times per day do you cross one of Lowell's bridges, on average? Where are you going to and coming from? Please explain in a comment.

- a). 0
- b). 1-2
- c). 3-4
- d). 5-6
- e). 6 or more

32). **Walking After Dark** – Do you walk anywhere in the city after dark? If not, what would make you more likely to do so? Please explain in a comment.

- a). Yes
- b). No

33). **Carbon Footprint** – What is your carbon footprint? Use the Nature Conservancy's Carbon Footprint Calculator to find out your estimated greenhouse gas emissions:

<http://www.nature.org/greenliving/carboncalculator/>.

- a). 5 or fewer tons per year
- b). 5 – 10 tons per year
- c). 10 – 20 tons per year
- d). 20 – 30 tons per year
- e). 30 or more tons per year

34). **Energy Efficiency** – What factors would encourage you to make energy efficiency improvements to your home?

35). **Innovative Ideas** - What innovative ideas do you have for Lowell?



MapIt

- 1). **Farmer's Markets** - If there was a farmer's market in your neighborhood, where would be the best place for it? What factors would make it the ideal farmer's market for you?
- 2). **Independent Movie Theatre** - If there were an independent movie theatre in Lowell, where would be the best place for it to be located?
- 3). **Favorite Park** - What is your favorite public park in the city and what do you like to do there?
- 4). **Street Lighting** – A number of local organizations have jointly launched a citywide 'Lights On' campaign as a way to keep neighborhoods safer and build a sense of trust amongst residents. Through the campaign, residents and business owners are encouraged to keep their porch lights on at night, so as to discourage criminal activity. Show your support for this cause by marking a spot on the map that could use more street lighting.
- 5). **Waterfront Places** - What is your favorite spot to spend time along the waterfront and what do you like to do there?
- 6). **Historic Trolleys** - If Lowell's historic trolley car system could be used as an alternative means of getting around the city, where would be the best place for trolley stops?
- 7). **Community Gardens** - What would be the best place for a community garden?
- 8). **Dog Parks** - If there was an additional dog park in the city, where should it be located?

9). **Pedestrian Connections** - What connections in the city could be better improved for pedestrian access?

10). **Favorite Skateboarding** – Where is your favorite place to skateboard in the city?

11). **Neighborhood Biking** – What street in your neighborhood has the most bike riders?

12). **Bike Racks & Amenities** - What location in the city would be best for bike racks and storage?

13). **Neighborhood Safety** – Which spots in the city could be safer?

14). **Trees** - What place in the city could benefit from more trees?

15). **Directions & Signs** – What spot in the city could benefit from more signage to help people find their way? What types of signs are needed?

16). **Favorite Public Art** – Where is your favorite public art located?

17). **Traffic Speeds** – Which location could use more traffic enforcement?

18). **Park Lighting** – Which park could most benefit from more lighting?

19). **Food Access** - Where do you and your family usually go to buy food, what types of things do you buy, and how do you get there?

20). **Cultural Symbols** – Which place in the city best represents you or your family's culture?

21). **Public Internet Access** – What location in the city could most benefit from public internet access?

22). **Gallagher Terminal** – What are the barriers to accessing the Gallagher Terminal?

23). **Food Truck** – Where would be the best place for a food truck to park during lunch time?



24). **City Stories** – What place in the city has a story to tell?

Challenges

1). **Mural Challenge** - Take your picture in front of a wall in the city where you wish there was a mural and post the photograph.



2). **The Social Life of Public Spaces Challenge** - William Whyte, a famous urban planner, once made a film called “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces” in which he explored the various ways people use public space. Here are a few clips from the film:

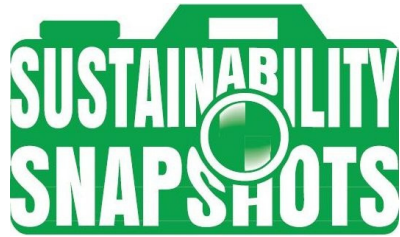
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2Qnkq6nIwA>. Pretend you are William Whyte, and that you are making observations of public places in Lowell such as the public library, a park, a plaza, or a busy street. What do you observe about the ways people behave, and what do your observations tell you about the ways that these spaces could be improved for future use?

3). **Neighborhood Tours Challenge** - Design a walking tour for your neighborhood. Mark the landmarks you would include on a hand-drawn map. Post your map and any other photos or videos from your tour here.



4). **Sustainability Snapshots Photography Contest Challenge** – Enter the contest for a chance to win a season pass to the Lowell Summer Music Series! Post your entry photograph here. For submission guidelines, visit:

http://www.lowellma.gov/newsitems/depts/dpd/master_plan/complete_masterplan/master-plan-update/Sustainability_Snapshots



5). **Local Food Challenge** – Make a meal using fresh fruits and vegetables from the Lowell Farmer's Market and share some with your neighbor. Take a photograph of your dish and share the recipe here!



6). **Lowell Sustainability Week Challenge** – Attend an event during Lowell Sustainability Week and post a photograph of what you did. For more information on the week's events and activities, visit: www.lowellsustainabilityweek.org.



Coins

- Arts & Culture
- Schools/Education
- Housing
- Open Space
- Jobs
- Public Safety
- Transportation